



# The book of Regency

ed stark





accessory

# the book of regency

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# introduction

The Cerilian map shows borders criss-crossing the continent's surface and strange names identifying its regions. Even the nearly unexplored lands to the north have been divided into realms, and those realms into provinces. The borders represent centuries of war and diplomacy, treaties and intrigue.

But they represent so much more as well.

Every border defines a realm, but each realm is also defined by its ruler—or lack thereof. These *realm regents*, as they can be called, rule the land of Cerilia—not just a guild holding or a magical source, not only a holy temple or enforcers of the law—but the *land* itself. Tied to Cerilia by their birthrights and their bloodlines, they govern the continent's realms and people.

This, then, is a book for them—a tome of information directed at realm regents, the men and women who govern the land. They might be warriors, priests, wizards, or thieves, but they influence the events of Cerilia and draw its ever-changing map boundaries.

A realm regent probably has at least one law holding to his name, or he likely won't be a realm regent for long. Because of this fact, *The Book of Regency* also discusses law domains and issues related to their rulership.

## how to use this book

*The Book of Regency* isn't just directed at players interested in realm or law regent characters. Much of this book can be used by the Dungeon Master (DM) as well. The BIRTHRIGHT® setting, in which player characters can become rulers of realms or even emperors of whole regions, emphasizes the regent character, and any player or DM interested in exploring the concept of regency (in this or other settings) can find useful information in these pages.

This book holds compiled information from some other sources, including the *Rjurik High-lands*, *Tribes of the Heartless Wastes*, *Havens of the Great Bay*, and *Cities of the Sun* campaign expansions. It also collects and expands upon some vital information from the BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook. However, readers of this text need to be familiar with only the BIRTHRIGHT campaign setting and the basic rulebooks of the ADVANCED DUNGEONS

& DRAGONS® game: the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide (DMG)* the *Player's Handbook (PHB)*.

The *Book of Regency* presents new options for Dungeon Masters and players of the BIRTHRIGHT setting, but all rules found within its pages should be considered optional. The DM and the players should decide for themselves which parts to use, which parts to consider, and which to set aside.

## definitions and notations

Cerilia holds as many different types of rulers as it does domains to rule. However, rulers can be classified into several general categories.

A **regent** rules at least one province or holding (law, temple, guild, or magical source). He may rule multiple holdings, different types of holdings, or both holdings and provinces, but he must rule at least one thing.

A **landless regent** rules *only* holdings; he has no land under his rule, no place he can point to on the continental map and say "That's mine."

A **landed regent**, or **realm regent**, rules at least one province. He may rule more, and he may rule other types of holdings as well, but the fact that he has subjects and land under his control is what sets him apart.

Throughout this book, references are made to province and holding levels. For a full discussion of provinces and holdings, refer to the BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook. However, a quick review of notations associated with holdings is in order.

The relative strength of holdings is denoted by levels; the higher the level, the stronger the holding. Holding levels are noted in parentheses: a law (2), for example. Province levels and magic potential are also noted in parentheses following the province name. Thus the notation "Allesrecht (6/1)" indicates that Allesrecht's province level (a measure of the amount of civilization in the province, its population, and the maximum level for a law, guild, or temple holding) is 6, while its magic potential (the maximum possible level for a source) is 1.

# the head that bears the crown

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*“Many different cultures live and thrive on the continent of Cerilia. Five human races and at least five nonhuman species maintain communities, laws, customs, and traditions. All have leaders. All have their own methods of governance.*

*“Diversity of society, government, and culture exists even within these surface divisions. Not all Anuirean realms have kings or warrior-lords at their heads. Not every Rjurik regent answers to a council of jarls. The Brechts value mercantilism and trade but have ancient lines of lordship as well. The Khnasi states and the tribes of Æsgaard have their overweening characteristics, but no two domains are ruled in exactly the same way. The elves, dwas, halflings, orogs, goblins, and gnolls of Cerilia govern themselves—and sometimes each other—with methods that defy generalization.*

*“It is said that in the days of the Anuirean Empire, more than one emperor tried to bring a single system of government to all the lands under his charge. People who otherwise respected, feared, or even loved him rebelled at this attempt. Willingness to bow to a foreign overlord was one thing—changing their system of governance was quite another.”*

—Oervel Osserlun, *Introduction to The Font of Authority, the Fall of Empire*

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**N**o two races or species in Cerilia govern themselves in the same manner—but similarities do exist. When the Flight From the Shadow and its subsequent colonization of the continent threw half a dozen human races together with nearly the same number of nonhuman

species, some blending of governments, societies, and philosophies was bound to occur. Today, Cerilia’s people divide the land and themselves along cultural, racial, and political lines. But they learn from each other and adapt, sometimes unknowingly, to the forces of history.

## humans

The cultures of Cerilia have changed since humans first emigrated from Aduria over two thousand years ago. The Masetians are no more. Their civilization and style of government departed this world in the wake of the Battle of Deismaar, though many of their customs and beliefs live on in the Khnasi. The Brechts and the Rjuven (now Rjurik), dominated for centuries by the Anuireans, learned lessons of empire from their masters. And the Vos, who once worshiped the god of moon and magic, have become the most barbaric of Cerilia’s human races.

Each culture, and each individual realm within those larger societies, developed its style of government over many centuries. The political structures that govern them today derive from their histories and adaptations made through the years to meet the changing needs of their people.

## anuireans

The Anuireans maintain an almost romantic view of their various forms of government. Most regents hold titles passed down to them through generations of leaders, and they take great pride in the origins and histories surrounding individual titles and lines of descent.

This romanticism derives from the ancient tribes of the Andu and their migration from Aduria to Cerilia. While the history of the Andu emigration was never documented fully, some legends combined with known facts can be taken as truth.

## the andu of old

The original five tribes of the Andu roamed northeastern Aduria until the Shadow (Azrai) came among them. Resisting his evil influence, they moved toward the land bridge connecting Aduria and Cerilia. Anuirean bards sing that the tribes fought Azrai fiercely and fled only when they could hold out no longer. As history portays the Andu as a vigorous and naturally aggressive people, this assertion does not seem unlikely.

Once in Cerilia, they organized their five tribes into military-like orders, each with a primary

leader and a hierarchy of lieutenants and warchiefs. Early leaders of the Andu earned their positions through accomplishment and cleverness. As the tribes moved farther north on the continent and grew complacent in the belief that they had distanced themselves from the threat of Azrai, the leaders and lieutenants appointed their own successors rather than leave the election up to the general populace. They generally chose members of their families—warriors and leaders they could trust and train in their own ideologies.

By the time the Deretha, the fifth tribe of Andu, perished in repeated confrontations with the Spiderlord (around -300 HC), the tribes had already begun settling southwestern Cerilia. No longer uprooting and moving north every few years, the Andu turned their thoughts toward permanent borders and governments. Since the elves of Cerilia hardly welcomed them as immigrants (partly thanks to Azrai's influence and partly because of the Andu's own warlike nature), the tribes retained their military-style chains of command. Each settlement had an overall leader or lord, and that leader appointed several subordinates, or vassals, to help govern the growing populace and defend the community from the elves and other dangers of Cerilia.

When the Battle of Deismaar erupted on the land bridge, the remaining four tribes of Andu constituted the largest resistance to Azrai. Drawing on their already-militaristic organization, the overlords summoned support from their vassals, who in turn mustered the Andu people. They marched to battle under different banners but stood as one force against the Shadow.

After the War of Shadow, the survivors stopped calling themselves the Andu and became instead "Anuireans." Roele, the last surviving overlord of the tribes, united the remaining vassals and began building the political and military force that became the Anuirean Empire. Before his death, he conquered nearly half the known continent. The empire he founded ruled nearly the entire civilized world.

## present-day anuire

Modern Anuire does not model itself after the now-fallen empire. Even before the death of Michael Roele, the last emperor of Anuire, the internal domains of the great empire had begun to fragment. The emperor's vassals—counts, dukes, barons, knights, governors, and other nobles or civil authorities—had more direct power over their subjects than ever before. When the emperor died, the empire died with him. Individ-

ual realms sprang up all over Anuire, ruled by "regents," originally appointed as guardians over territory governed by the emperor but now answerable to no man.

As a result, the various titles and orders of nobility in Anuirean lands range widely throughout the realms. A mere baron governs the sizeable domain of Ghoere, while a duchess rules the small realm of Brosengae. Theocracy emerged in Medoere, while monarchy remains strong in person of Darien Avan, Prince of Avanil. And a few strange, unconventional titles exist—the Mhor of Mhoried, for example. He traces his title back to Endira Mhoried, a female ruler who received her appointment from the second Emperor of Anuire.

This ability to trace lines of descent through centuries of history distinguishes the titles and government of Anuire from those of other regions. Anuireans remain proud of their lost empire and consider older titles more worthy of respect than any others in the land. As a result, a duke of one of the empire's 12 duchies outranks the king of an upstart realm. Being able to trace a title back to the days of empire is more important to an Anuirean lord than the appellation itself—be it count, prince, or king.

**Typical Forms of Government:** The Anuireans favor feudalism and monarchy. Regents of most realms tend to have the power normally associated with kings, though some engage councils of advisers and a few boast parliamentary structures.

**Notable Forms of Government:** Several theocracies exist within Anuire. The Anuireans take great pride in the worship and reverence of their gods, Haelyn especially. Although priests often eschew political power, some believe the marriage of church and state crucial to the spiritual lives of their followers. Others have been known to step in and serve when adequate rulers could not be found among the laity.

**Weaknesses of Government:** The Anuireans look backward instead of forward. While few commoners or nobles believe their rulers infallible, they resist the thought of revolution. The old ways built an empire for the Anuireans—one that lasted nearly a thousand years—and many feel certain that if a new emperor were to reclaim the Iron Throne, the empire could be reborn.

As a result, few governmental changes of any

significance are likely to be introduced in Anuire. Commoners and nobles remain completely divided in almost all the realms. The Anuireans consider enlightened feudalism the highest possible form of government.

## brechts

Always a fractious race, the people who became the Brechts of Cerilia arrived on the continent primarily by ship and over the course of several decades. They settled the lands around the Great Bay of Cerilia—the bodies of water known as the Krakennauricht, Dauren Arm, and the Black Ice Bay—and forged their own nations out of nothing.

## fragmented flight

The piecemeal histories that describe the Brechts' exodus from Aduria account somewhat for the development of their governments. Most Brechts fleeing the Shadow avoided the Andu tribes settled in the south of Cerilia (or became virtually enslaved by them) and sailed north around the western coast. They anchored in many harbors along the way and, while a few settled and either became part of Rjuven nations or disappeared into history, most found the land along the Miere Rhuann inhospitable. They avoided the elves and the Rjuven clans and continued north, through the Thaelasian Passage and toward the mouth of the Great Bay.

As they arrived, group by group, on the shores of the Krakennauricht, each ship of immigrants established its own system of rule. The Brechts settled their lands one at a time, independently of each other, creating no overall empire or political entity.

But this journey does not in itself account for the development of Brecht government. Most historians believe the old Brecht tribes, while still in Aduria, actually belonged to an ancient empire—one built primarily around an impressive naval power. This certainly could account for the fact that the early

Brechts developed ships at least as good as those possessed by the Masetians and the Basarji—and maintained a strong naval tradition even after they settled on Cerilia.

If this theory is true, the government of

the ancient Brechts may have controlled mercantilism and expansion to a great degree. Ancient scrolls passed down through generations of Brecht noble families tell of the basic principles behind all Brecht laws. These ancient laws and customs promoted trade—with other Brechts and other cultures—and disparaged imperialism. This philosophy, as well as their settlement in the mountainous bluffs elves seldom populate, might have helped the Brecht settlers avoid the worst of the *gheallie Sidhe* (the Hunt of the Elves) when other human races had to battle for every inch of Cerilian ground they tried to inhabit.

Like the Basarji and the Rjuven, the Brechts also fell prey to the imperialistic Anuireans. After the Battle of Deismaar, the Brechts lost their taste for fighting and looked forward to a long peace. They hoped to be left alone around their Great Bay—to explore and contact other races at their leisure. It was not to be.

The Anuireans took over Brechtür as easily as they invaded the Basarji region. Unprepared and decentralized, the merchant Brechts could mount little resistance when the Anuirean armies and navies arrived. The northern states—particularly Danigau (which had a strong military tradition)—stopped the invasion at their borders, but most simply accepted the new overlords.

However, the Brechts eventually dealt with the invasion in a more insidious manner than the Anuireans ever expected. While a few Brecht nations rebelled and gave their overlords trouble every step of the way, the more prosperous states accepted—and later *absorbed*—their conquerors. Within a few generations, Brechts and Anuireans lived together as one.

When the Anuirean Empire collapsed, only a few Brecht nations actually ousted Anuirean nobles. Most realms had already reverted back to Brecht control, and the people bore no ill-will toward the descendants of the invaders. The governance of each state had evolved over time, and each had its own unique culture and flavor.

## brechtür today

The rulers of Brechtür's individual realms have no interest in combining to form one empire. However, they have little objection to powerful regents within particular domains. Many realm regents take an interest in holdings other than those of law, but in many cases they employ vassals or allies (much like the Anuirean lords do) to control those holdings.

If the Brechts ever held ambitions of empire, those dreams dissolved along with the Brecht League of 1136 HC. This loose alliance of Brecht

realms had no clear leader; as a result, its attempts at imperialism proved disastrous. After its forces were routed from Vosgaard, the Brechts wisely returned their attention to the improvement of their individual realms and the development of their own governments.

The Brechts took what they liked of Anuirean custom (including many of the noble titles), brought back a few of their ancient customs, and built their own, unique governments. Few nations across Cerilia have adapted as well to their situations as some Brecht nations have. Müden, for example, has two realm regents ruling side-by-side and working with the other regents of the domain to make the nation as prosperous as possible. In Danigau, where ancient bloodlines run deep, the realm is as steeped in tradition as any Anuirean nation—a condition which helps them stand fast against their enemies.

**Typical Forms of Government:** Representative monarchies and feudal governments are common in Brechtür. The nobles of the realms often gain their positions through inheritance, but have to reassert their right to them every day while working with the other regents of the realm. Since the Brechts have a sizeable middle class, the leaders of most states find they have to answer to a large and vocal populace.

**Notable Forms of Government:** Capitalism is not unknown. While most nations have nobles for realm regents, a few look to guildmasters or other profit-making regents as leaders. Seldom does one monarch stand alone in Brechtür.

**Weaknesses in Government:** Decentralized and haphazard, most of the Brechtür states cannot respond quickly to outside crises. An invasion by a strong, dedicated power could sweep over many of the Brecht realms without pause—and before most Brechts could decide what they want to do. Even the most powerful Brecht lords hesitate to interfere in the workings or dealings of other realms—none want to reawaken the brief but doomed dreams of empire espoused by the Brecht League centuries ago.

## khinasi

Regency in Khinasi draws largely on the traditions of the Basarji, not the Masetians who predated their influence on Cerilia's southern coast. The rise of the Basarji corresponded with the destruction of the Masetians as a people. Most of the Masetians who survived the Battle of Deismaar became part of the Basarji culture; after only a few generations, the Masetians as a unique race became little more than a memory in all but the Island States.

## distant origins

The Basarji came from Djapar, a land beyond the Sea of Dragons. They wandered southeastern Cerilia as a nomadic people until after the War of Shadow, when they rebuilt and settled depopulated Masetian cities. But as their race gained prominence and power in the region, another race coveted their territory.

While the Basarji grew as a race and expanded their holdings, the new Anuirean Empire pounced. Even though the Basarji and the Anuireans had fought side by side against the Shadow, Emperor Roele had no compunctions about “including” the Basarji in the empire. Outnumbered and unprepared for full-scale war, the Basarji lost ground steadily for years. Soon most of Basarji, save Ariya and the Docandragh, had fallen under Anuirean rule.

After the initial invasion, the Anuirean overlords did not strain the Basarji states unduly. Many achieved a semblance of self-rule within a few generations. The Anuireans discouraged co-operation between the city-states (to avoid a united rebellion) but encouraged trade and free enterprise.

Eventually, the Basarji threw off the yoke of the Anuireans and reclaimed their nations—renaming their people “Khinasi” after the Great King el-Arrasi who led the Basarji Revolution.

## present-day khinasi

The Khinasi states remain individualistic, with few solid, permanent alliances between them. Their realm regents often take a hands-off approach to government or involve themselves in other interests as well. In Binsada, for example, the well-respected and active Queen el-Reshid rules with a gentle hand. Her law holdings remain low in power, but she encourages the guilds and temples in her state to advance faster than their competition. In Ariya, the prince rules more directly but concerns himself at least as much with the Ariyan Temple of Avani as with politics.

While the Khinasi respect lineage and history in the same way the Anuireans do, they allow more possibilities for advancement within their societal ranks. Perhaps this attitude developed during the Anuirean Oc-

cupation. Unable to rule or to serve their rightful lords, the kings and vassals of the Khinasi states turned to other pursuits. They found power in the temples and the guilds—and, most especially, in true magic. Internally, the Khinasi awarded those who became practitioners of magic (as well as those who worked hard at other crafts) and the various states began recognizing ability as a possible qualification for nobility.

When the Anuireans left, the Khinasi lords who ruled the lands could, for the most part, trace their heritage back to happier times. However, some gaps existed. Many guildmasters, temple regents, and wizards came from less noble stock, and the Khinasi recognized that these individuals had special gifts. They became the minor nobility of the latter age. In present-day Khinasi, many rulers can trace their lines to such humble beginnings.

**Typical Forms of Government:** Monarchies and dictatorships exist within Khinasi. Still, most of the enlightened and popular rulers of Khinasi states hold high titles but less power. They allow a little anarchy to exist within their domains, spurring other holders on to greater deeds. As often as not, realm regents involve themselves in holdings (other than law and province rulership) not normally associated with realm rulership.

**Notable Forms of Government:** The Khinasi recognize divine right as a possibility—but not an absolute. They tend to value skilled commoners and do not dismiss the importance of ability over lineage. As a result, many city-states of the region have one realm regent—but that regent weighs carefully the opinions of others who control holdings within his domain. Some city-states maintain parliaments and councils of authority.

**Weaknesses of Government:** The Khinasi do not like strong, centralized government. They don't like it within their smaller realms, and they certainly dislike the notion of a Khinasi empire. When el-Arrasi organized the Basarji Federation, he did so to provide more freedom for his people—not to replace the Anuirean overlords with overlords of a local nature. As a result, Khinasi states tend to be decentralized and, quite often, havens for intrigue and political machinations. While one realm regent might hold sway in a kingdom, he must always watch his back or the other regents might strip him bare.

## Rjurik

The Rjurik have departed little through the centuries from the forms of government their Adurian ancestors maintained.

## Rjuven roots

Like the Brechts, the Rjuven people migrated to Cerilia by boat, avoiding the Andu tribes and coming north along the western coasts of Cerilia. They arrived clan by clan, each an extended family sovereign unto itself and led by the head of the family, called a "jarl." The jarls answered to no one save the god Reynir, though they repected the wisdom of his priests, the druids.

These nomadic folk generally avoided the land's native elves and lived primarily in the areas along the Tael Firth. Cities developed out of mutual interest rather than necessity. Rjuven clans interacted with each other when they met in the forests or on the plains, but the cities sprung up when these extended families started to trade regularly with each other and the outside world. A few "urban Rjuven" permanently settled in the cities, but even these communities maintained a transient population.

As the Rjuven population grew, political boundaries were drawn. The clans negotiated territories for their populations; some banded together and chose "kings" to rule over the jarls. Their domain boundaries became lines of defense against attacks of the *gheallie Sidhe*.

After the Battle of Deismaar, the Rjuven (now Rjurik) returned to their holdings and settlements to resume their ancient ways. Living in relative harmony with the elves, and possessing more firmly established realm borders than before, the Rjurik enjoyed the peace after the war.

But it didn't last.

The Anuireans (again) caused the new era of peace to end. Roele attacked the Rjurik Highlands. Though the people successfully defended their domains, the southern realms eventually joined the empire of their own volition. The Anuirean overlords further solidified the realm borders and built up the trading settlements into "real" cities—from which they ruled.

This situation further reinforced the nomadic nature of the Rjurik. If they wanted to remain free, they had to keep moving. They did not emulate their overlords when Anuire finally retreated from the Highlands—though they kept the cities as trading centers and havens for the urban Rjurik.

## present practices

The clans continue to be led by kings, queens, and jarls. The latter generally serve as province rulers, while the former two govern whole domains. The Rjurik resist the thought of centralized government (witness Jankaping, for example, which totters on the brink of civil war), but they understand the need for an overall leader. Still, unilateral government is not the way of the Rjurik—the kings and queens answer to the jarls, and the jarls answer to their people.

Above all the kings and jarls sit the druids. As the sailors of Rjurik fishing boats say, the druids “prefer to navigate, but not steer” the realms and clans. They concern themselves with the politics and governing of the realms when they believe it necessary. Usually, they offer advice when asked, or when they feel a decision should be influenced by Erik’s will. Often, they speak in riddles or vagaries, trying not to side against the regents they advise or the people they protect.

**Typical Forms of Government:** While the Rjurik have monarchs (kings, queens, etc.), jarls and lords—often chosen by the people—rule the realms and nomads. True, the blooded and the nobility seldom give up their power completely to the commonfolk, but a Rjurik king must work to please his jarls, and the jarls must please their clans.

**Notable Forms of Government:** The Rjurik are “god-ridden” to the extent that they respect and revere their druids, turning away from other magics and declaring them unnatural. Yet they avoid theocracies. Each individual Rjurik believes Erik has a place in the government of the land and the clans, but a place right at the top. A king or jarl cannot ignore a druid’s advice—it comes from the gods—but the druids exercise enough wisdom to interfere with day-to-day government on rare occasions only. As a result, the druids continue to appear wise and gain reverence, while the kings and the jarls manage the less popular aspects of rulership.

**Weaknesses in Government:** The kings and queens, and even the jarls, tend to gain their positions through appointment or heredity. This practice often leads to squabbles among the clans—Rjurik ascension seldom goes smoothly. And even though they appoint most leaders for life, dissension does not end with the appointment. In some realms, every major decision must be ratified by a council of jarls.

The self-governing nomadic clans of the Rjurik Highlands present other problems. While most stick to traditional territories, returning to the same provinces each winter and summer and

having established understandings with the jarls who rule them, they are not required to do so. A nomadic clan that unexpectedly arrives in a province can create problems for kings and jarls who try to exercise their rightful authority.

## VOS

In no other human race of Cerilia do leaders wield power as absolutely as do the *tsarevos* of Vosgaard.

## VORYNN'S FOLLOWERS

The original Vos, when they lived in Aduria, could have been called mystic warriors. They followed the teachings of Vorynn, the god of magic, but also valued military prowess. Primitive in their ways of life and forms of government, they had a simple process by which they chose new leaders: a duel of strength and sorcery, survivor take all.

When the Vos fled the Shadow, they made a longer journey than any other human race. The southernmost of the five Adurian races, they moved through Anuire once they reached Cerilia and continued northeast until they reached the lands they still occupy today.

But moving as far as possible from Azrai’s shadow did not help them. Though only the strongest survived the trek, its arduous nature left them weak in spirit and vulnerable to malevolent influences. Azrai appeared and worked his evil on them; isolated from other human contact, they fell. Azrai played upon their primitive fears and desires, corrupting their love of magic into a brutal pursuit of power.

The Vos fought against their human brethren in the War of Shadow. Later, they continued to battle with the other human races and among themselves, following the war gods Belinik and Kriesha and splitting into factious tribes. Leaders retained power only so long as they could defeat pretenders in mortal combat. War priests became powerful tribal advisers, seizing the status once held by those who wielded Vorynn’s magic.

The Vos also battled the very climate in which they lived. Unlike the Rjurik, the Vos never saw beauty in Cerilia’s northlands. Many grew to despise their brutal ter-

rain and envy those who had better. Yet they fought fiercely to save their new homeland from those who would take it. In the last years of his life, Emperor Roele turned his imperialistic eye northeast and led a campaign to annex Vosgaard. Though heavily outnumbered and armed only with primitive weapons, the Vos fought back viciously. However, while the Vos militarily turned back the Anuirean forces, Vosgaard itself finally defeated the foreign threat: The Anuireans lost the battle against the elements. Roele's remaining troops retreated, leaving the wild men of the north to themselves.

So the Vos never came under the rule of the Anuirean emperors. Yet although they managed to unite (somewhat) to repel an outside invader, they quickly broke back into quarreling tribes and war-bands. The strong survived but seldom prospered. The work of each chieftain generally collapsed upon his death and bloodlines grew thin.

## current vos leadership

Today, most Vos nations stay together only out of habit or tradition. A wild folk, the Vos follow strength alone. Though not all Vos worship Belnik or Kriesha, they all fear and respect these gods—and their priests hold considerable sway.

**Typical Forms of Government:** In Vosgaard, the measure of a regent's law holding is how tightly he controls the actions of his people. Broken up into small tribes, most of Vosgaard's people suffer under the constant threat of war. Duels for leadership of a tribe are common, and few Vos realms respect the concepts of heredity or free election.

**Notable Forms of Government:** As in the Rjurik lands, the Vos gods play a great part in the rulership of the realms. But Vos priests seldom stay in the background. While war chiefs and tribal leaders may share the holdings within some individual realms, in others the priests rule them all. Vos priests use the power of their gods to subjugate their peoples.

**Weaknesses in Government:** The Vos fight against each other more often than not. Vendettas and feuds keep even moderate Vos tribes from evolving into anything approaching civilization. Only a few of the southern

Vos kingdoms, like Kozlovnyy, have overcome their barbaric ways and become civilized.

## elves

Several elven nations still exist on Cerilia. They rule themselves and remember the old times, when they alone walked the forests of Cerilia as free people. Many continue to look into the past—either in remembrance and mourning, or with thoughts of vengeance and recovery.

Most of Cerilia's elves share similar attitudes toward and systems of government, though variations do exist. The following are a few examples of elven rulership and regency.

## the aelvinnwode

This great forest once sheltered thousands of carefree elves; now only one elven nation remains. Tuarhievel, like most elven kingdoms, is ruled by a monarch. The queen or prince traditionally has the last say in all affairs concerning the kingdom. However, a council of nobles—the Council of the Moon—advises the regent on state matters.

Generally, elf regents pass on their monarchies to worthy successors only after centuries of rule. In Tuarhievel, the Thorn Throne itself decides who should or should not sit upon it. Candidates for rulership, therefore, try to make themselves worthy of regency. Prince Phileraene, for example, became a powerful warrior and formidable wizard while preparing for the throne.

## the coulladaraight

Rhianna Waymuun takes the title of Protector of Coullabchie, though she has earned the rank of queen many times over. The realm of Coullabchie is all that remains of an ancient kingdom that once filled a larger Coulladaraight with elven laughter and song. Now the elven realm contains only the memory of former glory.

Unlike the sad Emerald Queen of the Sielwode, the Protector of Coullabchie does not take the burden of the world upon her own shoulders. She does look to protect her borders from human encroachment, but keeps her folk aware of the outside world—and ready to deal with it. The Sayer of Coullabchie, her powerful court wizard, keeps the realm safe from human magics.

Like the Prince of Tuarhievel, the protector has opened up her realm—slightly—to nearby humans. Though she does not suffer them to walk beneath the eaves of the Coulladaraight (at least within the borders of her realm), she does allow elves to wander the world and come back

with reports and news. Her guildmaster and second adviser (after the wizard) keeps her updated on the happenings of Cerilia.

Though the protector sees herself as a servant of the elven realm, she does hold final say in all matters. She seeks knowledge and advice, knowing the wisdom of good advisers, but makes for herself any decisions that affect her realm.

## the sielwode

Little is known of the Faerie Court of the Sielwode. Its ruler, Emerald Queen Isaelie, seems to hold great power in her kingdom, but she uses it sparingly. She sealed off the borders of the Sielwode to humans (even though she truly feels no direct animosity toward them), and her stealthy hunters enforce her will as law. Still, they do not kill humans on sight—though the elves refuse to suffer them walking freely through the realm.

It seems in this elven kingdom, rulership is a burden, not a privilege. The Emerald Queen spares her elves the worries of the world by taking them all upon herself. She uses her realm spells and conventional magics to keep humans from encroaching on the realm's borders, but knows full well that the Sielwode cannot remain inviolate forever.

## the realm of rhoubhe

One of the great elves out of the distant past, Rhoubhe Manslayer continues his own private *gheallie Sidhe* against humanity. While most other elven realms have made peace (however uneasy) with the humans, Rhoubhe's domain is populated by elves who still desire the utter destruction of humans.

In order to keep his elves' hate flowing, Rhoubhe has established a near-complete dictatorship in the realm that bears his name. No advisers hold sway, and he has no thought for an heir or a dynasty. He trusts in his own hate and his elven immortality to outlast the humans who invaded and changed Cerilia forever.

In Rhoubhe's realm, what he says goes. Some of his greater henchmen (he holds none dear enough to appoint lieutenants) may question him, but only very carefully, for Rhoubhe's awnshegh blood drives him to acts of violence against any who gainsay him.

## elven realms in general

As the examples indicate, most elven realms employ monarchy as their primary form of government. Since elves do not have their own gods and do not worship human or other deities, they do not believe in divine right. Elf regents sometimes have to prove their worth to their populace—before and after donning the crown. Still, heredity does play a part in the lineage of most elf regents.

This fact does not disturb most elves, as they don't necessarily consider kingship and regency as privilege. Ruling a kingdom is a hard job to which few elves aspire. While a human peasant might fantasize about someday becoming a knight or even a lord, and a knight or lord might aspire to regency, elves generally long for more freedom and time to enjoy the wonders of the world. The rulers of the elves have less freedom than their subjects and must live with responsibility. The chaotic nature of most elves must be suppressed in a would-be king, or he will run his domain into ruin.

## dwarves

While several dwarf communities exist on the continent of Cerilia, three provide adequate examples of truly dwarven realms. These realms are, and always have been, ruled by dwarves who hold their race's ancient traditions sacrosanct—but in slightly different ways.

## baruk-ozhik

Grimm Graybeard has served for many years as overthane, or king, of Baruk-Azhik. His thanes, or lieutenants, rule four of the five provinces in his realm for him. While the overthane has the last word in all decisions, the council of thanes seldom lets any decision pass without discussion.

Dwarves are a lawful folk who have very conservative ideas about government. Each dwarf in Baruk-Azhik knows his place in society, and each expects all the others to fulfill their places. The overthane makes de-

cisions based upon this belief, and Baruk-Azhik is an orderly, well-run realm because of it.

Those who control temple and guild holdings in Baruk-Azhik seldom trouble the overthane. While guildmaster Diirk Watershold sometimes flaunts the traditional “closed border” policy of the overthane, both he and the high priest stand firmly behind the overthane when it counts. Otherwise, they do not interfere in the realm regent’s governance of the kingdom.

## daikhur zhigun

To the dwarves of Baruk-Azhik, the government of Daikhur Zhigun may seem a little primitive. The clan leaders of the dwarves in the Twin Fortresses have more say in the government and participate more actively than do the thanes of Baruk-Azhik. The king of Daikhur Zhigun rules because he heads the largest clan in the realm. Traditionally, the leader of the church of Moradin comes from the second-largest clan, and that dwarf serves as the king’s second-in-command.

Tradition governs Daikhur Zhigun as tightly as its realm regent governs the kingdom. While the dwarves of the Twin Fortresses interact more with the outside world than do those of Baruk-Azhik, they tend to be even more conservative in their internal dealings. The government resembles that of the Rjurik humans: Individual clan leaders speak nearly as loudly at council as does the king.

## khurin-azur

Unlike the other two dwarven kingdoms described here, Khurin-Azur maintains a true hereditary monarchy. Stonelords have ruled the three provinces of Khurin-Azur for uncounted generations.

Beset by enemies on many fronts, Khurin-Azur has become a very militaristic kingdom.

It maintains a strong army and Tjorgrim Stonelord, the ancient battle-scarred warrior-king of the realm, has two dukes (vassals) who help keep the provinces secure. If Tjorgrim were not such an accomplished warrior himself, the people would demand he appoint a warlord to lead the armies.

Even though the Stonelord rules his kingdom absolutely, he fosters

the support of the priesthood of Moradin and the guilds. Both the temple and guild holdings of the realm are more military-oriented than those of other dwarven realms. In fact, the Stonelord encourages the priests in his realm to maintain a small standing army.

Hereditary governments depend on tradition, but Khurin-Azur demands competency as well. Many appointed positions exist within the realm—dukedoms and lieutenancies must be earned. Weak Stonelords have existed in the past; their rules have been short and unpleasant.

## other dwarven colonies

Dwarves tend to be family-oriented, traditional, and conservative—and they like to be left alone. While dwarves may trade with other races, they prefer to keep their own dealings (particularly in government) to themselves. The dwarves of Mur-Kilad have been dominated by the Gorgon for so long they have lost much of their identity, but this is an exception to the dwarven rule.

More pockets of dwarves and dwarven communities exist in Cerilia than anyone suspects. Every region of the continent has at least one group of dwarves somewhere. Single clans or even families compose most of these tiny settlements, and much of their energy seems devoted to going unnoticed by the humans and other races of the area.

Some dwarves do live among men, elves, or even the humanoid races. In the Brecht realm of Dauren, for example, dwarves fleeing the domination of the Gorgon set up a small colony many centuries ago. When they encountered the human miners of Brechtür in the mountains, they quickly learned to work together and better each other’s techniques. Now, though they live under the aegis of human rule, the dwarves of Dauren maintain their own traditions and their own leaders.

## the traditions of the dwarves

The dwarves of Cerilia tend to be hot-blooded but stubborn, conservative but inventive, and greedy but fair. Dwarves often have complicated traditions and laws meant to defeat their own inner natures. Rather than fight endless feuds or hold grudges into the next millenia, most dwarves would rather submit to a complex but complete set of laws. Such a code keeps the indi-

vidual clans from fighting among themselves and keeps the business of the dwarves on track.

As a result, dwarves tend to think of their clans first, their kingdoms second, and their individual interests last. While it is true that a lone dwarf, adventuring or trading on his own, can seem self-centered or easily bruised by insult, that attitude arises out of his belief in tradition. The individual dwarf, out in the world, thinks of himself as a representative of his people—and those he encounters as representatives of *their* peoples. So, when one dwarf has a bad experience with, for example, a Rjurik trader, he spreads the word that Rjurik traders are bad. The same thing holds true for governments. If the dwarves of Baruk-Azhik have a negative encounter with guilders from Rohrmarch, they will hold a grudge against all the people of Rohrmarch—and perhaps all the Brechts as well.

Since these opinions can be formed out of single encounters, dwarves have complex traditions and procedures regarding contact and dealings with peoples of other races. Only through slow and careful interaction can human or other governments make alliances with dwarven kingdoms. And dwarves never forget a promise kept—or a promise broken.

## halflings

Though halflings live all over Cerilia—in all the human regions and even among some of the elven domains—they maintain only one known realm on the continent. This realm must suffice as an example of typical halfling government, though the government may be a product of the realm's surroundings.

## the burrows

This five-province realm existed long before the humans, or even the elves, of southern Brechtür and northern Khinasi noticed it. Quiet and pleasant, the Burrows does not close its borders to outsiders, but it somehow discourages the types of problems frequently encountered by other small kingdoms.

An outsider visiting the Burrows—especially a human outsider—would have a hard time noticing the halflings' government. A council rules the realm, headed by an elected leader; others who control holdings try to support the council and the realm regent on those few occasions when their backing becomes necessary.

The halflings, however, have a strong ability to

make other races underestimate them. Looking back through the past few centuries, wars and political conflicts have swept over the region around the Burrows, yet the halfling realm remains markedly untouched. Coincidence can account for only so much good fortune.

For the most part, the individual halflings of the realm govern themselves. They farm, they fish, and they build, giving little thought to government or defense. Still, they respond quickly when they have to—the last halfling mustering took less than a day and discouraged raiders driven out of the Sphinx's realm from preying on the "defenseless" halflings.

## halflings throughout cerilia

Halflings make their homes—as individuals, as small families, and even as tiny communities—in all parts of the continent. They usually ignore human or elven law as long as it ignores them, but they respect its presence and take care not to cause disruptions in its practice. When halflings do get noticed by their neighbors, they present themselves as cooperative, energetic, and cheerful.

It isn't surprising, then, that more than a few halflings have found places of importance in several realms. In Müden, for example, a halfling guildmaster serves as a lieutenant to the Count of Müden, and his niece runs a small temple (not to mention a secret guild of thieves). Other halflings work their way into human dealings as well, usually as merchants or scouts. While some humans may have trouble accepting the diminutive folk as figures of authority, the exceptional halfling that becomes one seldom needs to prove himself a second time.

## humanoids

Gnolls, goblins, orogs, and a few other humanoid races live in organized societies throughout Cerilia. Their main goal seems to be the destruction of other peoples—and if they can't destroy their neighbors, they quickly go to work on each other.

# goblins

Perhaps the most numerous of the social humanoids, the goblins also tend to be the best organized. Individually small and unimpressive, they breed—and fight—like rats, with little or no remorse for their lost comrades.

Though humans know little of Thurazor, the goblin kingdom in Anuire, it does appear to be the most civilized of all the known goblin kingdoms. Driven by necessity and the unusual wisdom of their leaders, the goblins of Thurazor maintain their kingdom carefully. They focus on making their realm strong and safe for goblinkind—in the hope that someday they can ruin their neighbors through cunning and goblin-strength.

The King of Thurazor rules by virtue of being old, canny, and dangerous. He keeps his lieutenants close; they keep their enforcers even closer. They punish those goblins who resort to chaotic and destructive ways, and the king focuses all goblin aggression into other passions or outwards.

Fortunately for Thurazor's neighbors, even civilized goblins cannot cooperate completely. The king's main occupation involves keeping his regency. His most trusted advisers and lieutenants are also his most bitter rivals—as expected. The goblin king wants only the smartest and toughest goblins by his side—and he anticipates that they will want his throne.

Regicide is the preferred method of passing on the kingship in Thurazor, and no goblin wants to change that. In a way, Thurazor's method of selecting a leader seems more enlightened than that of many lands. If a goblin proves smart enough, fast enough, and strong enough, it doesn't matter who his parents were or whether he can win favor with a collection of nobles. True ability (and more than a little luck) wins the monarchy of Thurazor.

## o<sup>rg</sup>ogs

The orogs of Cerilia maintain few known kingdoms. Organized in bands and small clans throughout the continent, the fierce and independent nature of the

o<sup>rg</sup>ogs keeps them from building secure domains. Their realms seem to thrive only in places where they can maintain constant war with their neighbors.

Such circumstances exist within the Iron Hand Tribes of Khinasi and in the Blood Skull Barony of the Rjurik Highlands. O<sup>rg</sup>ogs also maintain a strong presence among the Urga-Zai goblins, within the Gorgon's Crown, and in the Orlenaskyy Mountains among the Sword Rust Tribes.

O<sup>rg</sup>ogs have a very primitive view of government: The strong rule, the weak obey. A corollary to this rule seems to be: The weak plot to become the strong so that they can rule. Stable government has never been a trademark of orog society.

Thrakkazz the Scarlet Baron (of the Blood Skull Barony) has kept his rule for 10 years—longer than most orog chieftains can conceive possible. He somehow managed to find trustworthy lieutenants and vassals among his followers and uses them to subjugate the lesser o<sup>rg</sup>ogs and other humanoids in the area. It helps that the Blood Skull Barony is literally surrounded by enemies. Its only “safe” border seems to be the small southern one abutting the Giantdowns—and rumblings from the awnshegh Ghuralli have made this safety questionable.

## gnolls

Gnolls, like o<sup>rg</sup>ogs, tend toward brutal governance and unstable realms. The Black Spear Tribes of Khinasi actually serve the Lost sorcerer el-Shegh<sup>ū</sup>l. Garak zul Turbun, Great Yhan and chieftain of the Black Spear Tribes, believes himself to be the ruler of the chaotic gnoll bandits of this region, but he deludes himself. Without the sorcerer behind him, Garak's realm would have dissolved into chaos years ago.

Organized groups of gnolls do form realms from time to time. The Gnoll Fells humanoids in Vosgaard actually have a permanent temple to Yeenoghu, run by a gnoll priest. They maintain constant conflict with most of their neighbors, which allows their leaders to “weed out” potential troublemakers by sending them to the front lines.

Gnoll realms, when they do exist, assume predatory roles. As long as the gnoll leadership can direct its warriors' chaotic and destructive energies outward, the domain survives. When the gnolls fail in their conquests (or succeed too well), hostilities turn inward, usually with disastrous consequences.

## other humanoids

Trolls, giants, and other humanoid races maintain little if any social structure. Even the very small domains are the exception rather than the rule.

Often, solitary or small groups of humanoids can be found dominating or serving goblins or evil humans. Sometimes, whole bands of trolls might enlist as mercenaries, fighting under the flag of the Gorgon or another powerful awnshegh.

When the humanoids of Cerilia form governments, they often follow the “strongest will rule” method of kingship. Their tenures as kings tend to be brief, and their kingdoms last about as long as their lives.

## a final note on government

In Cerilia, governmental evolution has been slow. Often dependent upon strong traditions and the passing of divine bloodlines, governments remain much the same as they did hundreds of years ago. In some lands, particularly in Brechtür and Khinasi, the common folk have begun to raise their voices and be heard by the nobles. But it is a slow process—true democracy, socialism, and other forms of government seem far in the future of Cerilia. Enlightened and feudal monarchies, parliamentary aristocracies, and similar governments will rise and fall many times before more advanced ideals can be embraced.

# the blood of kings

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*"The blood of Anuire, of Cerilia, flows through your veins, my son. You and the land share the same history, the same blood, and the same life. If you die, the land dies and the empire falls.*

*"Unite the land, nuture it, and care for it, because when a man is separated from the land, he is nothing."*

— The last words spoken by Roele,  
first Emperor of Anuire

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## passing bloodlines

When a scion has a child, that child gains a bloodline with a strength, score, and derivation that reflects those of his parents.

If two scions have a child, his bloodline score is determined by averaging the scores of his parents. The child receives the bloodline strength and derivation of the parent with the highest bloodline score. So if a scion of Brenna with a great bloodline and a strength score of 30 has a child with a scion of Reynir who has a major bloodline of 40, the child has a bloodline of Reynir, major, 35.

Should a scion have a child with an unblooded person, the child gains the bloodline strength and derivation of his blooded parent, but only *half* the parent's bloodline strength score (round up). This number results from averaging the two bloodline strength scores—one a number greater than zero, the other zero.

## increasing bloodline strength

Bloodlines are measured by **strength** (a word: *tainted, minor, major, grat, or true*) and **score** (a number). The score is a rules mechanic used by players; the strength is largely a role-playing term for reputation used by characters. For example, a player would attempt to increase his PC's score to 29 so he could roll on a table to gain additional blood abilities or reap some other measurable reward. His character, on the other hand, perhaps a noble arranging a marriage for his daughter, would not look favorably upon a prospective groom for his "bloodline of 46" but for his family's "great bloodline."

Scions may increase their bloodline scores by committing **bloodtheft** or careful rulership (spending Regency Points); this much is known. Other methods for increasing scores may exist as well. However, no purely mechanical means can increase a scion's bloodline *strength* (from tainted to minor, for example, or minor to major).

Yet many scions aspire to better bloodlines. One might want to restore the grandeur of a noble family whose bloodline strength has suffered over the years due to ill-considered marriages. Another might want to increase his bloodline strength for status. Such an accomplishment

**B**loodlines and blood abilities mean more than power to the Cerilian scion. They imbue each blooded character with distinction—a sign that proclaims to the world that this person is destined to do *something*. For good or evil, better or worse, a scion links himself to the land the day he inherits a bloodline.

His actions will affect the world.

The blood of Cerilia affects the scion as well. Regents, especially, find themselves manipulated by their bloodlines. Few scions of Anduiras can resist the call to battle; those of Reynir's blood hearken to the trees and animals of the forest.

And of course, Azrai's evil taint compels the unwary and unfortunate, corrupting their hearts and minds against the good of the people Cerilia.

This chapter presents some new and revised information about bloodlines and blood abilities. It also provides easier-to-use blood ability tables, organized by bloodline and strength, that include abilities not detailed in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*. Finally, it explains long-range effects bloodlines can have on their scions—especially scions of Azrai.

is possible, though very difficult.

The first step toward increasing a scion's bloodline strength lies in his bloodline score. The scion must somehow increase his score past the maximum possible for his current bloodline strength. (To find this number, see Table 10: Bloodline Strength in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*) In doing so, he must also increase his bloodline score by at least 10 points, a symbol of his increased reputation.

For example, Kael has a tainted bloodline with a strength score of 12. Normally, he would have to increase it to 17, since the maximum tainted bloodline score is 16 (4d4). However, he has to work harder because he already had a relatively high tainted bloodline score. He must increase his bloodline score to at least 22.

Once the scion raises his score sufficiently, he then must prove to the DM that he is worthy of increasing his bloodline strength. If the scion goes on heroic quests (or, if he is evil, performs infamous deeds) and accomplishes legendary feats that help tie him to the land and legend of Cerilia, the DM allows him to increase his bloodline strength. So, after Kael raises his bloodline score to 22, if he completes heroic deeds he could increase his bloodline from tainted to minor.

Of course, the DM might require special, specific services from the scion before allowing this to happen. Think of the quest to increase one's bloodline strength as a particularly notable deed—it happens infrequently and always contains the stuff of legend. Advisers and seers can point out how other scions may have accomplished this feat, but no one can say for sure what caused the increases to occur.

**Note:** No bloodline can be increased in strength more than once per generation; this should indicate how difficult a feat it is to achieve. The quest or deeds that cause this increase to happen should reflect a lifetime of achievement—though the scion may continue adventuring afterwards. (At the DM's discretion, scions with the long life blood ability can increase their bloodline strength more than once, but each increase should require several centuries.)

**Special Note:** Under no circumstances can a great bloodline be increased to true. The only true bloodlines come from heroes and villains that were actually at the Battle of Deismaar. True bloodlines may be found among scions born to the current generation of Cerilia, but these should be rare and special occurrences.

## repercussions of increasing a bloodline

Scions who increase their bloodlines cause ripples on the surface of Cerilia. Only characters with special abilities or spells can detect a bloodline—not to mention its strength or derivation—but when someone increases a bloodline, the change becomes known. The scion's improved reputation impresses most people—it increases the number of henchmen he can have, the upper-level limit on lieutenants he can recruit, and generally makes him more famous throughout the land.

But bad things happen as well. The blood hunters—characters like the Gorgon or lesser awnsheghlien who seek out scions and kill them for their bloodlines—find out about the scion's change in status and are attracted by it. They see a bloodline that has just increased as a potential supplement to their own.

## blood ability tables

Before using these new blood ability tables, one must first ascertain the character's bloodline derivation and strength as described under "Bloodlines" in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*. Then simply roll on the correct table to determine which blood abilities the character possesses.

These tables have a key that explains where to find the description of any blood ability:

- Unless otherwise noted, the blood ability is explained in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*
- \*Starred abilities are described in the *BLOOD ENEMIES* accessory.
- **Boldface** entries are new abilities described in this chapter.
- *Italicized* entries are considered signature blood abilities. (See discussion later in this chapter for more information about signature abilities.)

**table 1:**  
**anduiras blood abilities**

<b>Subtable A (Anduiras, Minor)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-11	Animal Affinity
12-18	Bloodmark
19-25	Courage
26-31	Detect Lie
32-37	Detect Life*
38-49	Enhanced Sense
50-57	Healing
58-69	Heightened Ability
70-75	Iron Will
76-84	Long Life*
85-91	Major Resistance*
92-98	Resistance
99-00	Unreadable Thoughts

<b>Subtable B (Anduiras, Major)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-13	Animal Affinity
14-21	Battlewise
22-25	Bloodtrait*
26-32	Courage
33-38	Detect Life*
39-43	Divine Aura
44-49	Divine Wrath
50-62	Enhanced Sense
63-70	Healing
71-82	Long Life*
83-89	Major Resistance*
90-93	Protection From Evil
94-00	Resistance

<b>Subtable C (Anduiras, Great)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-12	Animal Affinity
13-16	Bloodtrait*
17-26	Courage
28-40	Detect Life*
41-46	Divine Aura
47-48	Elemental Control
49-60	Healing
61-78	Long Life*
79-88	Major Resistance*
89-90	Regeneration
91-00	Resistance

**table 2:**  
**azrai blood abilities**

<b>Subtable A (Azrai, Minor)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-04	Alertness
05-16	Animal Affinity
17-25	Bloodmark
26-29	<i>Death Touch</i> *
30-32	Detect Illusion
33-38	Detect Life*
39-51	Enhanced Sense
52-64	Heightened Ability
65-70	Iron Will
71-82	Long Life*
83-88	Major Resistance*
89-91	Poison Sense
92-98	Resistance
99-00	Unreadable Thoughts

<b>Subtable B (Azrai, Major)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-04	Alter Appearance
05-15	Animal Affinity
16-22	Battlewise
23-47	<i>Bloodform</i> *
48-52	Charm Aura*
53-55	<i>Death Touch</i> *
56-59	Detect Life*
60-69	Enhanced Sense
70-71	Fear
72-82	Long Life*
83-88	Major Resistance*
89-92	Persuasion
93-98	Resistance
99-00	<i>Wither Touch</i> *

<b>Subtable C (Azrai, Great)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-08	Animal Affinity
09-16	<b>Berserker's Blood</b>
17-34	<i>Bloodform</i> *
35-39	Charm Aura*
40-45	Detect Life*
46-49	Divine Aura
50-53	Invulnerability*
54-65	Long Life*
66-71	Major Regeneration*
72-77	Major Resistance*
78-79	Regeneration
80-85	Resistance
86-87	Shadow Form
88-90	<i>Touch of Decay</i>
91-98	Travel
99-00	<i>Wither Touch</i> *

## table 3: basaiä blood abilities

Subtable A (Basaiä, Minor)	
<b>d100</b>	Ability
01-05	Alertness
06-16	Animal Affinity
17-23	Bloodmark
24-26	Detect Illusion
27-29	Detect Lie
30-35	Detect Life*
36-47	Enhanced Sense
48-55	Healing
56-67	Heightened Ability
68-72	<b><i>Light of Reason</i></b>
73-80	Long Life*
83-91	Major Resistance*
92-98	Resistance
99-00	Unreadable Thoughts
Subtable B (Basaiä, Major)	
<b>d100</b>	Ability
01-12	Animal Affinity
13-16	Bloodtrait*
17-21	Character Reading
22-27	Charm Aura*
28-33	Detect Life*
34-37	Divine Aura
38-42	Divine Wrath
43-56	Enhanced Sense
57-65	Healing
66-70	<b><i>Light of Reason</i></b>
71-82	Long Life*
83-89	Major Resistance*
90-92	Protection From Evil
93-00	Resistance
Subtable C (Basaiä, Great)	
<b>d100</b>	Ability
01-12	Animal Affinity
13-17	Bloodtrait*
18-24	Charm Aura*
25-33	Detect Life*
34-37	Divine Aura
38-39	Elemental Control
40-49	Healing
50-55	Invulnerability*
56-66	<b><i>Light of Reason</i></b>
67-80	Long Life*
81-88	Major Resistance*
89-95	Resistance
96-00	Travel

## table 4: brenna blood abilities

Subtable A (Brenna, Minor)	
<b>d100</b>	Ability
01-05	Alertness
06-17	Animal Affinity
18-22	Blood History
23-29	Bloodmark
30-33	Detect Illusion
34-37	Detect Lie
38-44	Detect Life*
45-57	Enhanced Sense
58-70	Heightened Ability
71-82	Long Life*
83-89	Major Resistance*
90-98	Resistance
99-00	Unreadable Thoughts
Subtable B (Brenna, Major)	
<b>d100</b>	Ability
01-05	Alter Appearance
06-17	Animal Affinity
18-21	Bloodtrait*
22-26	Character Reading
27-33	Charm Aura*
34-42	Detect Life*
43-54	Enhanced Sense
55-62	<b><i>Home Hearkening</i></b>
63-77	Long Life*
78-84	Major Resistance*
85-88	Persuasion
89-92	Protection From Evil
93-00	Resistance
Subtable C (Brenna, Great)	
<b>d100</b>	Ability
01-14	Animal Affinity
15-20	Bloodtrait*
21-28	Charm Aura*
29-37	Detect Life*
38-47	<b><i>Home Hearkening</i></b>
48-67	Long Life*
68-77	Major Resistance*
78-87	Resistance
88-90	Shadow Form
91-00	Travel

**table 5:**  
**masela blood abilities**

<b>Subtable A (Masela, Minor)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-15	Animal Affinity
16-20	Blood History
21-28	Bloodmark
29-32	Detect Illusion
33-27	Detect Lie
28-35	Detect Life*
36-42	Direction Sense
43-60	Enhanced Sense
61-81	Long Life*
82-88	Major Resistance*
89-97	Resistance
98-00	Unreadable Thoughts

<b>Subtable B (Masela, Major)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-15	Animal Affinity
16-19	Bloodtrait*
20-27	Detect Life*
28-32	Divine Aura
33-39	Divine Wrath
40-54	Enhanced Sense
55-72	Long Life*
73-76	Major Resistance*
77-80	Protection From Evil
81-90	Resistance
91-00	<i>Sea Song</i>

<b>Subtable C (Masela, Great)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-20	Animal Affinity
21-29	Bloodtrait*
30-40	Detect Life*
41-46	Divine Aura
47-50	Elemental Control
51-69	Long Life*
70-74	Major Resistance*
75-85	Resistance
86-00	Travel

**table 6:**  
**reynir blood abilities**

<b>Subtable A (Reynir, Minor)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-03	Alertness
04-15	Animal Affinity
16-20	Bloodmark
21-23	Detect Illusion
24-26	Detect Lie
27-31	Detect Life*
32-33	Direction Sense
34-44	Enhanced Sense
45-54	<i>Forest Walk</i>
55-62	Healing
63-74	Heightened Ability
75-78	Iron Will
79-89	Long Life*
90-93	Major Resistance*
94-95	Poison Sense
96-99	Resistance
00	Unreadable Thoughts

<b>Subtable B (Reynir, Major)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-13	Animal Affinity
14-17	Bloodtrait*
18-26	Detect Life*
27-31	Divine Aura
32-45	Enhanced Sense
46-58	<i>Forest Walk</i>
59-67	Healing
68-82	Long Life*
83-87	Major Resistance*
88-92	Protection From Evil
93-00	Resistance

<b>Subtable C (Reynir, Great)</b>	
<b>d100</b>	<b>Ability</b>
01-14	Animal Affinity
15-18	Bloodtrait*
19-26	Detect Life*
27-32	Divine Aura
33-34	Elemental Control
35-47	<i>Forest Walk</i>
48-57	Healing
58-73	Long Life*
74-79	Major Regeneration*
80-87	Major Resistance*
88-90	Regeneration
91-00	Resistance

## table 7: vorynn blood abilities

### Subtable A (Vorynn, Minor)

d100	Ability
01-14	Animal Affinity
15-20	Blood History
21-28	Bloodmark
29-32	Detect Illusion
33-36	Detect Lie
37-49	Enhanced Sense
50-62	Heightened Ability
63-70	Long Life*
71-78	Major Resistance*
78-86	<b>Mebhaighl Sense</b>
87-96	Resistance
97-00	Unreadable Thoughts

### Subtable B (Vorynn, Major)

01-05	Alter Appearance
06-23	Animal Affinity
24-29	Bloodtrait*
30-35	Character Reading
36-43	Divine Aura
44-58	Enhanced Sense
59-66	Long Life*
67-75	Major Resistance*
76-84	<b>Mebhaighl Sense</b>
85-89	Protection From Evil
90-00	Resistance

### Subtable C (Vorynn, Great)

d100	Ability
01-15	Animal Affinity
16-26	<b>Berserker's Blood</b>
27-31	Bloodtrait*
32-38	Divine Aura
39-45	Invulnerability*
46-52	Long Life*
53-61	Major Resistance*
62-75	<b>Mebhaighl Sense</b>
76-90	Resistance
91-00	Travel

## new blood abilities

Each new blood ability described here may be carried by any character of the appropriate bloodline. These abilities appear on the tables in this book, but at the DM's discretion may be substituted for blood abilities rolled on other tables.

### Berserker's Blood Great

Derivations: Azrai, Vorynn

Few on Cerilia doubt that this blood ability initially came to the Vos as a gift from Azrai. Still, it somehow managed to manifest in Vorynn's heirs as well. The Vos blessed with this blood ability see it as a sign of strength, and those who still worship Vorynn perceive it as a mark of forgiveness for their race's past transgressions.

Scions with this ability can surpass the limits of mortal endurance and battle after other mortals would have died at the hands of their enemies. When a scion with the *berserkei's* bloodability suffers enough damage that his hit points fall to zero or lower, he can make a saving throw vs. death magic in an attempt to keep fighting. The scion may add 1 point to his saving throw for every two levels of experience he has achieved.

If the saving throw is successful, the scion goes into a berserk fury. The scion may fight only with melee weapons or bare-handed, and will attack the nearest opponent single-mindedly. When he defeats that opponent, he moves on to another. When he runs out of opponents, he must make a saving throw vs. petrification or continue attacking the nearest living being (friends included).

The scion continues to fight until he runs out of people to attack, he is somehow healed to above zero hit points, or he suffers damage beyond zero equal to his bloodline strength score. Should this last condition occur, he falls into a coma. If he cannot be brought to positive hit points within two rounds, the scion dies.

If the scion receives enough healing to bring his hit points above zero, he lapses into a deep—but normal—sleep. He must rest for twice the number of rounds he spent fighting at zero or fewer hit points, or make a system shock check every round he acts. If he fails the check, he dies immediately.

After recovering from the berserker fury, the scion must make a final saving throw vs. paralysis to determine whether he suffered any long-term damage. If he fails, he loses one point of his bloodline strength permanently. (It may be earned back in the normal course of game play, but cannot be brought back by a restoration spell.)

### Forest Walk Minor, Major, Great

Derivations: Reynir

Scions can use this ability to harmonize with the forest, moving through it without affecting it. A character with the minor ability may pass through any light, medium, or heavy forests at no penalty to his normal movement rate. No normal tracking ability (such as that of rangers) can dis-

cover his trail—as per the priest spell *pass without trace*. All natural tracking abilities, such as the sense of smell possessed by hunting hounds, are also useless.

At major power, this ability grants the scion resistance to magical forms of tracking. The scion gains 5% resistance per experience level whenever he is in forest terrain. This resistance applies equally to spells or magic items (such as a *crystal ball*) that could be used to locate or track him.

As a great ability, forest walk enables a scion to enter the edge of any forest and, after walking through it for a certain number of hours (24 minus one-half his experience level), emerge from the same forest at any point desired. For example, a 10th-level character entering the Aelvinnwode in northern Taeghas could walk for 19 hours and emerge anywhere along the Aelvinnwode's borders—as far away as northern Turhievel or even back where he started.

During the time the character moves through the forest, he travels in a normal manner. He may make rest stops (for no more than fifteen or so minutes at a time) and have encounters, and he will pass through provinces one at a time. But at the moment his walk ends, he instantaneously teleports to his chosen destination.

**Note:** The scion must decide his destination when he enters the forest. If he changes his mind during his forest walk, he may continue traveling normally or reenter the forest to begin a new forest walk.

Scions possessing this ability at major or great power gain the benefits of the lesser powers as well.

**Home Hearkening**      Major, Great  
Derivation: Brenna

A regent with this blood ability has an even stronger connection to the land and holdings he rules than do most regents. As a major ability, home hearkening remains a mostly dormant ability while everything goes well in the regent's domain. However, if any of the holdings experience a challenge or threat (such as a contest domain action or monster random event), the regent immediately feels uncomfortable and needed. The feeling persists until the regent (or someone else) settles the matter.

No range limit for this ability exists—as long as the regent lives and has access to this blood ability, he'll know

when trouble threatens any of his holdings.

As a great ability, home hearkening enables the regent to do something about the situation from afar. Presumably, the regent maintains ties with family members, extremely close friends, vassals, and lieutenants within his realm. The regent can, after feeling the disquiet caused by unrest in a province or holding he controls, project this feeling and his desire for action to one of those people. No two-way communication is possible, but the regent empathically may make his wishes made in a general way. As a result, the regent can respond to threats in his realm while hundreds—or even thousands—of miles away.

**Note:** Nonregent characters, too, may possess this ability. They initially feel a tie to their homelands but can, over time, redirect this tie to any semi-permanent base (the scion usually must live in an area for at least six months before the tie binds). The scion, of course, cannot perform domain actions and has links to family members or extremely close friends only, but he still experiences disquiet when trouble appears.

**Light of Reason**      Minor, Major, Great  
Derivation: Basaiä

Characters with this ability can use the power of the former sun goddess to light their surroundings. A scion who calls upon this ability actually radiates light as described below.

At minor power, this ability functions as a *light* spell with the scion as its center. The character can create a sustained glow of artificial light for a number of turns equal to the character's level. Scions may call on this ability up to three times per day.

As a major ability, light of reason functions as above. In addition, once per day the scion can generate a brilliant instantaneous flash of light. Anyone within a 30-foot radius must succeed at a saving throw vs. paralyzation or suffer blindness for a number of rounds equal to half the character's level (round up). Scions with the light of reason at any degree (minor, major, or great) are immune to the effects of this flash when generated by themselves or another scion with the same ability. Other characters who anticipate the flash (such as fellow adventurers who have been warned) can avoid the effect by averting their eyes.

Scions with this ability at great power can generate both the sustained glow and the flash as described above. However, in doing so they actually radiate sunlight. This light affects undead and other creatures hindered by sunshine exactly as if it came directly from the sun itself.

### Mebhaighl Sense      Minor, Major, Great

Derivation: Vorynn

Scions with mebhaighl sense are particularly in tune with the natural magic of Cerilia. With a minor ability, the character can tell whenever someone casts any type of wizard or magician spell within a 100-yard radius. He feels a tug in the general direction of the spellcasting, but gains no more information.

With the major power, the scion has access to the minor power but also gains the ability to determine what school of magic has been cast—immediately and instinctively. If the character has no real knowledge of magic (in other words, he doesn't know the names of individual schools of magic), the DM should describe to him the type of magic he feels. For example, if someone were to cast a spell from the school of divination, the DM could say that he feels as if someone were watching him or probing the area in which he stands.

With the great power, the scion gains both of the above abilities and can also perceive whether magic has been cast in a certain area in the recent past. The scion can attune himself to an area up to 100 yards in diameter. He can feel whether any spells have been cast in the area and of what school. The scion can sense magic cast within a period of one week per experience level.

This ability enables a scion to sense realm spells as well as conventional magic. If a realm spell has been cast on a province the scion is in (or to which he attunes himself within the time limit above), the character learns that a realm spell was cast, and from what school the magic derives.

The scion cannot detect the casting or presence of priest spells using this ability.

### Sea Song      Major

Derivation: Masela

Characters with this ability have a particular affinity for the water and the sea. They can, on occasion, interpret the “song of the sea” to gain news and information from bodies of water.

The scion must stand near or in a large body of water—such as a bay, sea, ocean, lake, or large river. The scion can then ask questions of the water, in much the same manner a priest asks questions with a *communespell*. The questions need to have simple answers (preferably “yes” or “no” answers; otherwise the response will be vague), and they must pertain to the water itself or lands touched directly by the body of water.

**Note:** The ability's area of effect is limited to single bodies of water, not other bodies they might empty into or adjoin. For example, using

sea song to talk to the water in the Dwarfhame (an inlet on the eastern coast of the Krakennauricht) does no good if the scion seeks news concerning the coastal provinces of Kiergard—he'd have to talk to the waters of the Dauren Arm instead.

The scion may invoke this ability once per week for every three levels of experience he has attained, and ask one question per experience level. The water answers as truthfully as it can, but sometimes errs. In general, the water “knows” more about water-related things: whether ships sail on its surface, certain fish swim within it, or whether a sea storm is brewing.

## signature abilities

The stamp of the old gods remains strong on the scions of Cerilia. A few blood abilities may be inherited by scions of only a particular bloodline: bloodform (Azrai), courage (Anduiras), death touch (Azrai), fear (Azrai), forest walk (Reynir), home hearkening (Brenna), light of reason (Basaïä), mebhaighl sense (Vorynn), sea song (Masela), touch of decay (Azrai), and wither touch (Azrai). These blood abilities most closely reflect the nature and concerns of the old god who passed the blood ability on to his champions.

Some scions believe that a person possessing one or more signature abilities of his bloodline has some special gift or mission from the gods. Since most signature abilities belong to the hated bloodline of Azrai, however, this theory does not bode well for Cerilia.

As a result of possessing a signature ability, a scion may feel certain “pulls” toward or away from actions of a particular nature. Sometimes, these mystic tugs steer the scion into situations where he might use the ability in a manner that seems fitting to the old god from whom it is derived. In more general cases, the pull simply guides the character toward actions that would seem consistent with the old god's nature.

This tendency can often cause problems for characters whose personal mis-  
sions,

alignments, or character classes do not harmonize perfectly with the bloodline they possess. For example, a dwarf scion might have the bloodline of Masela and the sea song blood ability. Although Cerilian dwarves do not have a fondness for water, this particular dwarf might “hear” the call of a babbling brook or the crash of waves on a shore when his bloodline wants him to get close to the water—an uncomfortable situation for the dwarf.

## player tips

Good role-players whose characters possess bloodlines probably already attempt to work with any dichotomy in their natures. Warriors with Vorynn’s bloodline could develop an interest in the workings of magic, or in the strategic application of spells on the battlefield. Rogues possessing the Anduiras bloodline derivation might decide to become “honorable” thieves, stealing from only the evil or “those who can afford the loss.”

The pull of a signature blood ability can be used to emphasize this possible contradiction. The player might choose to use his signature ability (or abilities) only when he thinks it should be used—in a role-playing, rather than practical, sense.

## dm tips

DMs should not be shy about suggesting uses of signature blood abilities that support the nature of the god who supplied the bloodline in the first place. They needn’t force players to go along with these suggestions, but might indicate when something “feels” right or wrong to the characters.

However, DMs should never allow the bloodline to take the place of problem-solving or moral debates. Players should come to realize that the bloodline is *not* a cognizant entity within them, but rather a part of their own natures.

And it might not always encourage PCs to act in their best interests.

# becoming an awnshegh

The tug of Azrai’s bloodline may not be subtle. Characters need not be born with signature blood abilities of Azrai, or even Azrai’s bloodline flowing in their veins, to be corrupted into awnsheghlien. Any character touched by the blood of Azrai—from within or without—risks evolving into a monster of horrific power, regardless of his initial alignment or bloodline derivation.

Two clear ways exist for a character to become an awnshegh. The first method has been documented only a few times—but perhaps has occurred more often than people realize. When a non-awnshegh kills one of these powerful monsters, that character’s own bloodline (if any) can succumb to that of the awnshegh, provoking a frightening transformation.

The second method takes more time but has produced many more awnsheghlien. By giving in to the blood of Azrai and acting in an evil (or even merely a chaotic) manner, characters begin to transform into a terrible monster. Awnsheghlien produced this way may develop quickly or slowly, depending on the strength of Azrai’s blood in their veins, the way they use their blood abilities and bloodline, and the alignment to which they adhere.

## the short road

Facing an awnshegh in battle may be just the beginning of an adventurer’s worries. If the awnshegh possesses great power and a high bloodline strength, that creature’s power could, upon its death, overcome the resolve of the truest hero and cause a commoner, scion, or regent to become an awnshegh himself.

No one is certain exactly how a character becomes an awnshegh through this method, but rules can be extrapolated here. Use the following guidelines to determine whether a character who kills an awnshegh and commits bloodtheft on the creature (in other words, stabs it through the heart for the death blow) becomes an awnshegh.

- If the awnshegh’s bloodline score is equal to or greater than its slayer’s, there is a chance the character will become an awnshegh. If the slayer’s bloodline score is greater than the awnshegh’s, no chance exists.
- Divide both characters’ bloodline scores by 6 (round up). Record the awnshegh’s num-

- ber as *attack dice* and the slayer's number as *defense dice*
- The character's alignment affects his number of defense dice. If the character is good, add one die to his number of defense dice. If he is neutral, add nothing; if he is evil, subtract one die from his defense dice. (Note: If, in the DM's opinion, a PC has not acted in accordance with his alignment recently, that may alter this modifier.)
- Both the character's and the awnshegh's bloodline strength affects the number of dice each will roll. If either has a tainted bloodline strength, subtract one from the number of attack or defense dice that character has. Apply no modifier for a minor bloodline. For a major bloodline, add one die; for a great bloodline, add three dice.
- The awnshegh (probably the DM) rolls a number of eight-sided dice equal to his modified attack dice; the slayer rolls a number of six-sided dice equal to his modified defense dice. If the total number generated by the awnshegh equals or exceeds the number generated by the slayer's dice, the slayer becomes an awnshegh (see below). If the slayer's number is higher than the awnshegh's, bloodtheft occurs normally and the character retains his current bloodline derivation.

**Becoming an Awnshegh:** If a character loses the defense of his bloodline, his bloodline derivation immediately changes to that of Azrai. He gains twice the number of bloodline strength points he would normally gain from committing bloodtheft against the awnshegh, but pays a terrible price.

First, unless the character is of good alignment and (in the DM's opinion) has acted *scrupulously* in accordance with that alignment during his adventuring career, his alignment immediately changes to that of the awnshegh he killed (or some evil alignment, if the awnshegh was one of the rare neutral abominations of Cerilia). This change may not be permanent (that's for the DM and player to decide), but it does happen now.

Next, the character could gain one or more blood abilities from the awnshegh he slew. Consult Table 12: Blood Ability Acquisition in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook* using the scion's new bloodline score. If the bloodline strength points acquired by the scion push his score past a new break point, roll to see if he gains any new blood abilities.

If the scion does gain new abilities, they should be those of the awnshegh he slew, if possible. The strength of the ability may differ, but it should be the same ability. (For example, if a scion kills an awnshegh with the animal affinity ability at great

level, but rolls only a minor ability on the table, he acquires the minor version of animal affinity.) The DM may decide to give the character other blood abilities instead of those possessed by the defeated awnshegh, of course—but the process usually occurs in this way.

Unfortunately, the scion may also lose some blood abilities. Any abilities not available to the character's new bloodline disappear immediately. Some abilities may change (the totem animal for the animal affinity ability would change to a serpent, for example). However, the scion gains replacement abilities. The player can simply re-roll for blood abilities he lost (at the same strength) on the Azrai tables included in this chapter. The DM, however, may decide to choose blood abilities for the character.

Regardless of how the character's blood abilities change, the scion goes through a physical transformation almost instantly. The PC takes on monstrous characteristics, usually determined by the DM (with the player's input), and may gain a few special abilities. The specific changes often reflect some of the character's personality traits or the abilities possessed by the awnshegh he slew. A warlike character could gain natural weaponry (such as claws, fangs, or a tail weapon), while a stealthy scion might grow fur or change his skin color (for camouflage). Most of the game mechanics of these modifications should be minimal (weapons might add 1d6 or so points to hand-to-hand damage; stealth coloration could add 15 percentage points to a thief's hide in shadows chance or give a non-thief that ability).

Over time, the DM may wish to increase some of these abilities (fangs grow longer, fur grows thicker) as part of the character's development. As always, however, there is a price. Newly transformed awnsheghliens who use their abilities in an evil or chaotic manner and do not fight against the pull of Azrai's bloodline continue to change dramatically. The Gorgon, for example, began as a handsome human man and degenerated over centuries into a hideous monster. Maalvar the Minotaur, however, still retains human characteristics—though with horns and the body of a horse. Naturally, exceptions to this rule exist, but in general, the outward appearance of an awnshegh reflects its inner nature.

## the path of evil

Characters with the blood of Azrai in their veins seem destined to become awnsheghlien. The blood tugs at them, tempting them to evil and chaotic acts. The DM should “role-play” the blood of Azrai in a character, advising the scion to evil and chaotic deeds—at first subtly, then strongly.

The blood rewards its victims. When a scion with the blood of Azrai commits an evil or chaotic act (or even just an especially brutal or violent deed in the name of neutrality or good), he may find himself “rewarded” by Azrai’s blood in one of several ways. Some examples include:

- **Characteristic incr ease:** On rare occasions, the blood may increase one of the scion’s lowest ability scores (seldom Charisma) by one point. This change rarely happens more than once—unless the character gives himself over wholly to evil. The scion, of course, does not know the danger he courts; he may commit more heinous acts in the hope of boosting his abilities yet again. This is the hope of Azrai’s legacy.
- **Bloodline incr ease:** Scions usually increase their bloodline scores by spending Regency Points (if they have any) or by committing bloodtheft. But Azrai’s blood can reward its possessor for particularly vile acts by raising the bloodline score one point. This won’t happen often, but over time it might make a difference.
- **Special abilities:** The blood of Azrai might choose to award its bearer with new abilities. At first, these rewards manifest subtly—the character might gain an ability similar to a blood ability but much less pronounced than one of even minor strength. For example, scions of Azrai could have the blood ability enhance sense. With this ability they could see into and through shadows without difficulty, decreasing the chance that someone could hide in shadows to surprise them. The blood might begin to develop this ability in a character, gradually enabling him to see better in darkness or making the ability come and go when the occasion seems appropriate.

The DM may choose to create other sorts of “rewards” to scions

tempted toward evil. The rewards should seldom be as powerful as those gained by actual blood abilities—and may be only story-oriented in nature.

Unfortunately for the scion, the blood exacts a price for its rewards. The bloodform ability, which engenders the physical transformation of an awnshegh, can manifest at any time in a scion of Azrai. Upon failing his first temptation, the doomed scion begins a physical transformation. Usually, this transformation reflects the nature of the reward. (Increased strength might make the character look unnaturally large, while a scion with a new perception ability could have bulging or glowing eyes.) It should *not* be as instantaneous a change as the transformation caused by killing an awnshegh and being overcome by its power, but it should be immediately noticeable.

These transformations may at first be easily masked or hidden by wary scions. Those who embrace the blood of Azrai may choose to bear them as a badge of distinction—but most PCs will try to hide Azrai’s taint.

Theoretically, characters who begin this sort of transformation can take it as a warning and back away from the temptation of Azrai’s blood. However, seldom in Cerilian history have people “gifted” with the blood of Azrai made their situations known before transforming irrevocably. If any scions have retreated from the path of evil fully and successfully, it has not been recorded.

## signature abilities and awnshegh transformation

If a character possesses a signature ability of Azrai’s bloodline, it may hasten his corruption. Every time the budding awnshegh uses a signature ability, his transformation should accelerate dramatically. Even if he uses the ability in the cause of good, he’ll find his body transforming more rapidly and his willpower being challenged more regularly.

Abstaining from the use of one of Azrai’s signature abilities causes the pull of the bloodline to become more intense—but it does slow down the transformation.

# the call of the ehrshegh

The existence of the *ehrsheghlien* (altered, non-humanoid creatures of good whose name derives from an elvish word meaning “Blood of the Light”) has been confirmed only recently. Few *ehrsheghlien* exist; fewer still maintain as public a profile as their counterparts, the *awnsheghlien*.

Most people believe the *ehrsheghlien* are the last gift of the old gods who united to defeat Azrai at Mount Deismaar, sacrificing themselves to bring down the evil Shadow at the last. The bloodlines they gave to their champions produce heroes of light who war with the creatures of darkness.

Becoming an *ehrshegh* is, not surprisingly, much more difficult than becoming an *awnshegh*. The blood of the other gods does not tempt like Azrai’s does, and it does not dominate its host. Instead, like the gods themselves, the bloodlines of Anduiras, Basaiä, Brenna, Masela, Reynir, and Vorynn only give mortals the tools they need to fight the Shadow.

Scions are rarely born with bloodtrait, the ability that enables *ehrshegh* transformation. Far more often, characters manifest this ability only after intense devotion to their chosen alignments.

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## legend of the man-eel

One legend told in Khinasi suggests an amazing transformation. It speaks of an ancient *awnshegh*, the *Ulscatha* (“Man-eel”), a Masetian who survived the Battle of Deismaar only to succumb to Azrai’s blood.

The Man-eel swam the coastline of the Baïr el-Mehare and the Gulf of Coeranys, using his half-man, half-eel form and his other abilities to lure unsuspecting bathers and sailors to their dooms. A hideous creature, he became more cruel and destructive as the seasons passed.

But one day, as he trolled the coastlines for prey, he came upon a beautiful Basarji maid bathing in the shallows. Rather than attempt to trick her into the deeper water, he chose to come out of the sea and assault her on the beach. She was alone and would be no match

for his strength.

As he swam stealthily up to the beach, however, she turned and gazed directly into his eyes. Surprised, he returned her gaze. He saw no fear there—no terror, no loathing, no hate—only pity, compassion, and an offer of friendship. Instead of fleeing, she approached him—slowly, as if he were a rabbit, cornered and afraid.

Seeing the dark, beautiful woman walk toward him scared the Man-eel more than he’d ever been frightened before. He retreated quickly, never looking away. She kept moving toward him, saying something, but her voice was lost in the waves. Eventually, the Man-eel turned and fled back into the depths of the ocean, where he disappeared forever.

Yet that is not the end of the story. Some months later, a terrible storm swept over the coasts. Many ships crashed on reefs or were torn apart by the winds and the waves. Hundreds of sailors drowned.

But not all. Many mariners reported that a creature of the deeps, looking much like a colorful, giant ribbon-fish with a man’s arms and torso, came to their rescue. He dragged the sailors, dazed, from the surf and placed them safely on the shore. He used his great strength to free makeshift rafts from the shoals, and dove time and again into sinking ships to free those trapped by the water. The mariners called him *ep-Ajarifa*, or “Water Sprite,” and held him in great esteem.

When an artist among the mariners drew the Water Sprite and compared it to the lexicons of known undersea life, they found it resembled the Man-eel most of all. Certain facial characteristics were unmistakable—but the cruelty and hate were gone, replaced with compassion.

No one knows whether the Water Sprite was truly the Man-eel, transformed by pity and kindness from an *awnshegh* monster to an *ehrshegh* rescuer. The Water Sprite appeared many more times over the next few years, and the Man-eel never reappeared. Both, however, have been lost to time.

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No rules exist for becoming an ehrshegh. The process is similar to the second method of becoming awnshegh—only it takes much, much longer and is brought on by the will of the scion. One must work for many years in the cause of good before a transformation begins.

Unlike transformations caused by the blood of Azrai, the outward signs of the ehrshegh often make the character more attractive and impressive to others. Even those scions who undergo extreme, bizarre transformations—like Borelas the Badger, a human ranger who seems to be transforming into an animal—seldom inspire terror or loathing in those who see them. While “beautiful” awnsheghliens such as the White Witch cause fear or disquiet in those they encounter (unless they work hard not to), ehrsheghliens inspire calm and goodness in like-aligned individuals.

## signature abilities and the ehrshegh transformation

As stated above, many scions believe characters possessing signature abilities have been marked by a greater destiny. If a scion uses his signature abilities in a manner closely tied to his alignment and in accordance with the general beliefs surrounding the old god whose bloodline he inherited, he may slowly begin the process of transforming into an ehrshegh. Of course, if the character misuses a signature blood ability (either in an action not consistent with his alignment or one not corresponding to the nature of the god), he sets himself back greatly in his quest to become an ehrshegh.

# anatomy of a law holding

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*"Sire, I am pleased to report that your sheriff has at last driven the bandits out of your realm's north-eastern corner. Her victory lends a stability to the province already recognized by the peasants. Even now, settlers are beginning to construct homesteads and farm the land."*

*"Soon, you may wish to consider appointing a stronger authority in the region. As the population increases, you will want to ensure that the crofters of that outlying area continue to recognize the long arm of the law as your own."*

—Druand Resurvont, legal adviser

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**O**n the surface, law holdings may seem the most mundane of the four types of holdings a BIRTHRIGHT regent can possess. After all, sources' mystical nature makes them appealing, and temples and guilds seem more tangible than something as nebulous as "law." But those who control law wield a unique kind of power in Cerilia.

Law holdings do not of themselves confer realm regency—just because a regent controls the law of a province does not mean he rules the land (or vice versa). A character who controls any or all of the law in a province may dictate and enforce the laws of the land, or he may bow to a higher power.

The law regent is not necessarily a mere law-enforcement agent or a lackey. Likewise, law holdings do not necessarily constitute police forces or codes of conduct. Law holdings appear in diverse forms, and can be wielded in a variety of ways.

## the influence of the law holding

As stated in the *Rulebook* a law holding is any entity that affects a ruler's ability to control a province and the loyalty of his governmental services. The actual make-up of the law holding can vary widely, depending on its level of influence and relationship to the realm.

### law (0) holdings

A holding (0) is usually found in low-level provinces where law has hardly had a chance to form. In a province (1) to (3), such a holding reflects the beginning of law and order. Usually, a law (0) indicates that a moderately powerful character, probably a regent who controls law holdings in neighboring provinces, has reached out to try extending order to a new territory. His representatives are probably a few sheriffs, perhaps henchmen or even hirelings. Their main job is to lay the groundwork for future improvement by making the area safe and ready for law.

In populous areas, law (0) holdings usually constitute an alternative or a challenge to law of another kind. Since there may be any number of 0-level holdings in a province (regardless of its level), a law (0) in a mid- to high-level province that also supports law holdings of higher levels usually reflects some very specific influence wielded by an individual or very small group. Perhaps the regent of the law (0) has control of a local judge, sheriff, or constabulary. He has the power to influence a very narrow sphere of control within a limited area and the nature of his influence is probably pretty specific. For example, such a regent might have a local judge "in his pocket." Any case that comes before that particular judge will probably go the regent's way (maybe with a few bribes or arm-twists), but the regent can't affect any other public service or law-oriented activity.

**DM tip:** If a character controls a law (0) holding, he's right on the edge of disaster—or of creating a brand new power base. Left unchallenged, he will probably increase the hold-

ing level and order the province to meet his needs. Until he does so, however, you should severely limit his ability to make decrees or award grants based on the law (0) holding. Certainly, he can publish any sort of legal papers he wants, but the residents of the area probably won't honor these orders unless they wish to do so.

## law (0) example

A ruler controls a fairly wild province (1/7). Virtually all the inhabitants of the province live in a tiny village, but no law holdings order their lives (they just live there without any real rules or laws governing them). The province ruler creates a law (0) holding by sending his rangers to order the forest. The villagers don't care one way or another, so the regent acts unopposed.

However, the regent decides to award one of his henchmen with a grant of land—coincidentally, the land on which the village sits. Now, even though no other law exists in the province, the DM declares this action ineffective; in story terms, when the henchman rides in to take over the village, the villagers see his scrap of paper (the actual grant) and laugh him out of the province. Basically, the province ruler/law regent *still* didn't have enough authority to make his grant stick automatically. The DM rules that the regent must increase his law holding (presumably by sending in more rangers and, perhaps, some sheriffs or henchmen) if he wants to dictate his laws to the inhabitants of the province.

## law (1) to (3) holdings

Holdings of levels 3 and below are called "low-level" for a very good reason; the regent who controls law holdings of this size has built only a foundation of law and order in his province and must still work toward increasing the holding level if he wants complete control.

### the only game in town

When a low-level law holding exists alone in an equally low-level province, its presence means that the small population generally respects the authority of the regent. The higher the percentage of control the regent has, the

more authority the people give him—a law (1) in a province (3) isn't particularly influential, but a law (3) in a province (3) is. However, the law regent must take into account the rest of the province. What is the potential province level? If this were a province (3/4), where the regent has a law (3) holding, over half the province (the rest of the province's potential) remains wild and lawless. Generally speaking, over half the territory has no law and—probably—no civilization.

On the other hand, what happens when a regent controls the only law holding in a *high-level* province, say a law (3) in a province (7/0)? In that case, virtually all of the province has been "civilized" and is heavily populated, but the regent's law influences less than half the citizenry. In the former example, wild, untamed wilderness took up a majority of the province; in the latter, anarchy rules rather more effectively than the law regent.

**DM tip:** Since no other regent controls the law in the province, the law regent faces only disorganized challenges to his rule. When much of the province remains wild, the DM may want to increase the chance of monsters or other creatures causing difficulty in the law regent's area. When a significant part of a heavily-populated province remains uncontrolled by law, bandits and challenges to the regent's rule show up with greater frequency.

### competition for law regency

In order for two or more regents to control holdings of the same type in a single province, the province level must be (4) or greater (except in the case of 0-level holdings, which were discussed above). Where multiple law holdings exist, two or more regents compete for influence in a relatively populous area.

Often, at least one of the competing law holdings is considered illegal or even rebellious. In a large, heavily-populated province (8), for example, up to three regents may have law holdings (per the guidelines presented in the *Rulebook*). The province ruler may control none of these holdings, one of them, or all of them (directly or indirectly). Those he does not control may be considered illegal or rebellious, or could simply be parallel legal systems, depending on the situation.

To determine how much effect any one law regent has on the populace of the province, simply determine the percentage of control he has. Even the ruler of the province cannot influence legal matters (directly) unless he has a significant law holding as well. The higher the percentage of control any law regent has, the more likely people are to listen to him. This could either mean that a percentage of the people follow the law re-

gent's rules all the time, or each individual has a percentage chance of obeying a given law. In both cases, the percentage is equal to the percent of rulership the law regent wields in the province.

**DM tip:** With two or more law regents trying to enforce authority in the province, things can get interesting. Play the regents off each other. Even if all the law regents consider themselves allies and act in accordance with each other all the time (extremely unlikely, even if they are PCs trying to get along), their lieutenants, henchmen, and hirelings—not to mention the general populace—likely will compete with each other and follow only one ruler. Each side may believe the other(s) to be less important and possibly illegal or treasonous. Use NPCs from the province, and even from other realms, to stir up trouble.

## law (1) to (3) example

In a province (9), three regents control the existing law. One, the province ruler, controls a law (1). The second, the province ruler's ally, holds a law (3). The third regent, who does not respect the province ruler's authority, actively controls another law (3). This leaves two levels of the province uncontrolled by any law.

The province ruler publishes a decree stating that no citizen may be on the street after 10 p.m. However, since he has only a small law holding (probably an official constabulary or some sort of government offices tied to law holdings in other provinces), he has few police or constables in place to enforce the curfew. So, unless he brings in his army to enforce the decree by occupying the province, this new ordinance has only a marginal effect. Either a mere 11% (one-ninth) of the population obeys the decree, or a particular individual has an 11% chance of respecting it. Regardless, the new law hardly cuts down on the number of people staying out at night.

But the situation changes if the province ruler's ally supports the decree. (He does so by issuing one of his own to make his feelings known.) All the people who respect the second regent's authority follow the dictate of the province ruler. Now the new ordinance has a 44% (4-in-9) rate of compliance.

Perhaps, however, the third law regent doesn't like the ordinance. Maybe it affects his allies' holdings, or maybe he's just ornery. He issues his own decree stating that people can stay out as long as they wish, and that his law enforcers will protect them. One-third (33%) of the province follows his lead (or, individuals have a 33% chance of actively disobeying the first two regents). Recall that the province still has two un-

used levels of potential law holdings, so some citizens will ignore the bickering regents altogether.

So, on a d100 roll, with all three regents involved, 1-44 means that an individual obeys the ordinance, 45-77 means that an individual goes out of his way to disobey it, and 78-00 means that the character pays no attention to any of the regents and does whatever he pleases.

## the power of the law

How much status does a law regent command within a province? It depends on holding level.

**Level 0:** Beginnings of law. The regent, and perhaps a few henchmen or hirelings (or allies), enforce the law themselves where and when they can (usually as adventurers would).

**Level 1:** First establishment. The regent has some primary base of operations and some help. He probably has a defined territory or some "route" known to the people of the province.

**Level 2 or 3:** The primary base grows. The regent's laws still cover only basic behaviors, but they become more widely known throughout the province. The regent may still enforce the laws personally, but he has something of an organization behind him.

**Level 4:** Bureaucracy begins. The base becomes an established network. More people than not consider the regent an authority (legitimate or otherwise) in the province.

**Level 5 or 6:** The bureaucracy spreads. The regent heads a large organization, comprising mainly law-keepers and law-makers, but also some sort of law interpreters as well. The regent is removed from personally enforcing the laws except in special cases or at his whim.

**Level 7 or higher:** The law defines the nature of the province to a great extent. Even the province ruler becomes directly affected by the law (though he may not be subject to it—the law does not have to be beneficial or even fair). The law regent's network is so extensive that he can virtually control other holdings through decrees and law holding claims if he wishes.

# level (4) holdings and higher

After a law regent begins to maintain law holdings of (4) or greater, he is into “high-level” law management. In all but a very few cases, he probably controls a majority of the law in the province. He might control all of it, and could even control the province’s entire potential for law.

## the majority leader

Whenever the regent of a law (4) or higher controls the majority of law in a province, his dictates should be given extra weight. It doesn’t matter if he is a benevolent or tyrannical ruler; the people either respect or fear him enough to listen. Even if other law regents exist in the province, he has the majority and can back up his dictates.

Law (4) holdings don’t just have sheriffs or a “city watch” under their control; they have the beginnings of a bureaucracy and a legal system. Laws become more intricately detailed, like a spider web, where each strand supports many others.

This does *not* mean the law regent must become some sort of tyrant—nor does it indicate incorruptible law and order. The regent’s own alignment more directly affects the legal system under his thumb, since the law of the land all generates from his attitudes and tastes. Essentially, he extends his values and beliefs outward, affecting everyone in the province to some extent.

**DM tip:** Someone has to be the bad guy. When one regent stands out from the others, he usually gets the job. Every “bad” or “harsh” law gets blamed on the top man, even if he had nothing to do with it. While the other law regents might go along with his laws and decrees (though they are just as likely to team up against him), they should always be looking for ways to increase their influence at his expense or the

expense of their other competitors. The highest-level regent will usually find himself distracted by matters of law while the others coast along, waiting for an opportunity to strike.

## a battle for dominance

When two or more law regents control identical-strength holdings of level 4 or higher, clashes on legal and even moral grounds become more significant and pronounced. Again, even if the two regents work together in harmony, their subjects won’t. Whenever one regent makes a decision or performs any action not immediately supported by the other regent(s), dissention will arise.

Of course, in many cases the regents start this dissention themselves. When two regents control high-level law holdings, they generally have pretty strong attitudes regarding how “their” province should be policed and run.

**DM tip:** This situation usually arises only when one regent manages to out-maneuver another and “catch up” with his level of holdings. In this case, competition is bred into the relationship. On the off-chance that the two have an amicable relationship, it will only enflame their supporters and sycophants. Each side will attempt to paint the other as the “bad guy,” unless the regents take action to keep this from happening. Even so, any occurrence that makes one regent look bad usually makes the other look good—and vice versa.

## the only game in town (part 2)

When the regent of a law (4) holding (or higher) controls *all* the existing law in a province, he suddenly becomes incredibly effective. Even in the most developed province, a single regent determines what is lawful and what is not for over half the populace.

With great power, however, comes a great headache. Suddenly, the regent becomes responsible for everything “legal” within the realm. Every crime, every infraction, and every loophole in the law becomes his personal problem and, even though he has a bureaucracy to help him solve these difficulties, his visage is the one everyone thinks of when considering the face of law in the province.

The regent’s decrees become much more powerful. While in reality a law (4) holding in a province (4/4) means the regent’s legal power extends to only half the province (leaving the other half “untamed”), his representation remains pronounced. Those who do not wish to subject themselves to the regent’s law must actively avoid it.

**DM tip:** When a law regent becomes this powerful—alone—he makes enemies. The people of the province may consider the law regent a tyrant, even if he is actually a lawful good paladin

with only the best of intentions. This feeling peaks every three months or so, when they have to pay taxes and tithes. Add to that decrees and grants regarding new laws or rewards for select individuals, and the possibility of rebellion seethes. When a regent has no competition, he often finds himself competing with himself. Make his people harder to satisfy and more willing to grumble against the laws of the land and he has something to worry about.

## character of the law holding

The nature of the law regent defines the nature of the law holding. For the most part, the atmosphere derives from the regent's alignment, but it might also reflect his character class, general outlook, and personal tastes. It is important that a law holding mirror the character who controls it, since law holdings greatly affect the people who live under them.

## law holdings and alignment

Alignment affects the nature of law holdings just like it affects a character. When a player chooses an alignment for his character, he chooses a pattern of behavior for that character to follow. For regents, this pattern will influence the law holding he controls.

### lawful good

The alignment most often associated with law and order, lawful good actually can prove a difficult alignment for players of law regents. Players often associate the lawful good alignment with "good guys" and "heroes," thinking of such characters as self-sacrificing, noble, and kind. But enforcing the law in a lawful good realm isn't always easy and often doesn't win friends.

The lawfulness of a lawful good regent inspires him to set up a code of rules he expects his subjects to live by. His goodness means he'll probably expect himself to live by these rules, which isn't always easy for a ruler who is also an adventurer. Lawful good characters often become hampered by their strict observance of the law on one hand, and their general desire to do good on the other. Add to that the fact that they hold *all* their

subjects (even the non-lawful, non-good ones) to the same moral and legal standards and problems can arise.

For example, a lawful good character is the one most likely to defend an evil character when everyone else wants to punish or destroy him for being evil—even if he has not committed a crime. Lawful good characters tend to set up fair legal systems and a series of checks and balances that prevent "witch hunts" and lynch mobs, prohibiting any citizens (even themselves) from taking the law into their own hands. When they encounter a character known to be evil, they do not act against him until he does something to break the laws of the land.

On the plus side, when a lawful good regent rules up his law holding high enough to dominates the law of the province, most people in the realm feel fairly well-disposed toward the law and the regent. They recognize that even if the regent's laws are strict, they tend to be enforced fairly and equitably, even when it isn't convenient.

Lawful good regents want an ideal set of laws everyone can understand and respect. They don't want to be above the law, or even the main focus of it. They believe the province's order and good to be more important than anything else.

### chaotic good

The chaotic good regent may have a little trouble being a law regent, but not as much as one might expect. Chaotic good law regents tend to emphasize the good of the individual over the good of society when they make and enforce laws. They often sacrifice strict interpretations of the legal code in favor of moral standards, following the spirit over the letter of the law. Chaotic good regents leave some room for "give" within their laws.

This tendency makes most average NPCs friendly toward the law of the land. As the law regent rises in power, they know he will always try to act in accordance with his conscience and protect his subjects as individuals, not just consider the province as a whole.

Unfortunately, any law regent is often called upon to make judgements regarding legal issues and established traditions—and a chaotic good regent

could end up contradicting himself based on personal feelings during given instances. The regent's agents have the same power, which allows for more contradictions. In short, the populace may like and respect the chaotic good regent, but they won't always know where they stand under the law.

Chaotic good regents shy away from creating wide-sweeping laws and permanent decrees. They much prefer analyzing specific situations and reacting accordingly. Individuals should have their say under the law, and the good of the province should not outweigh the good of the individual.

## neutral good

The most important thing to a neutral good law regent is the achievement of good ends. Anything that promotes good works; anything that does not promote good, doesn't work. This world-view does not mean the neutral good law regent draws from both law *and* chaos to structure his domain. Rather, he abandons *both* structures as inadequate and tries to define his own.

The end justifies the means. If the regent must pass a law that hurts a third of his subjects to help half of them, he'll do it—if no other alternative exists. All laws, decrees, and domain actions become mere tools toward promoting good.

This approach can leave the subjects of a neutral good law regent somewhat disconcerted. They often aren't sure where they "rate" in their ruler's order of importance. While lawful good regents put the province before the people, and chaotic good regents regard the individual as the most important entity, neutral good law regents rank an idea—"good"—above everything else.

Without some clear direction, neutral good regents unintentionally can promote general apathy in their provinces. Their laws often don't make a lot of sense to the common man, because they are crafted to serve an ideal, not a person or a province. Many laws get ignored or misinterpreted not out of malice, but ignorance.

In short, neutral good law holdings serve good. While the regent tries to treat his people fairly and equitably, he always looks toward the ideal, rather than the concrete.

## (true) neutral

The true neutral alignment does not lend itself to law regency. As in the case of neutral good characters, law regents with true neutral alignments tend to serve an ideal. Often, this approach promotes a *laissez-faire* attitude among the people and a somewhat ambivalent set of laws. The law regent wants everyone to have a "fair shake," but doesn't always want to define "fair."

Neutral law holdings and their laws generally do not try to restrict anyone or anything, except when that person or thing interferes with someone else. The ultimate arbiter, the neutral regent tries to posit himself, and his law holdings, as compromiser.

The subjects of a neutral law holding must become masters of balance to survive and prosper. They must weigh their actions against counteractions and try to walk the line between them. For the average NPC, this isn't very hard. If a character shows favoritism to another, he may be forced by the law to establish some sort of equanimity; should a character harm another, he must correct the damage or pay an equitable penalty. Of course, the law regent himself, or his representatives, must be called on to judge this equity—and it can become a long, arduous process.

In general, neutral law regents try to leave things alone until they need balancing—not necessarily *fixing*, but *balancing*. They want their people to see them as fair, in the sense that they do not act *for* anything (except to achieve balance), but *against* those who disrupt the neutrality of the province.

## lawful neutral

Like the neutral good regent, the lawful neutral regent focuses on an ideal. He wants his domain to achieve balance *and* fairness, and he'll use the order of law to accomplish this objective. As with a true neutral leader, the moral aspects of good and evil do not enter into the equation. The lawful neutral regent devotes his law holdings to establishing balance through *order*.

Quite often, lawful neutral law holdings have extensive legal systems and an amazing set of checks and balances set up so that no one remains above the law. Their enforcers are the "eye for an eye" folks who make certain that the correct "eye" gets paid to the rightful recipient.

Subjects of a lawful neutral realm always know where they stand. They have to keep the status quo, and they probably have several proscribed ways of doing it. The lawful neutral regent does not welcome change in his laws, unless the

change manifests itself as a more effective way of promoting the order of the domain. This leads subjects of lawful neutral realms to believe that, as long as they act in certain manner and pay attention to every new order or modification in the law, they can get by without any real difficulty. The law may interfere and intrude in their lives, but it won't disrupt their existence as long as they pay attention to it.

The regent wants things to work this way. His laws promote balance and order, without meddling in moral standards or disputes. As long as everyone can exist under the law without interfering with anyone else, the domain is running fine.

## chaotic neutral

The law holdings of a chaotic neutral realm may appear to be in disarray. The regent believes in the importance of the individual (as in chaotic good domains), but places no moral structure upon him.

The few laws that exist in a chaotic neutral realm emphasize the individual's role in the ideal of neutrality. Everyone, the chaotic neutral regent believes, has a role in the domain and should be free to pursue it. When one person's role interferes with another (either for good or ill), a law or judgment may be necessary to interpret the effects.

The chaotic neutral regent's subjects have to react moment-to-moment to the law holdings' dictates. They may be left alone for years at a time, then suddenly have to embark on a major change of lifestyle in order to promote the balance of the domain. Usually, the chaotic neutral regent tries to make everything work for the individuals in his realm, but whatever he does affects everyone, and that could mean lots of little decrees and new laws rather than one or two big ones.

## lawful evil

A lawful evil realm may appear lawful neutral or even lawful good at the beginning, but as the regent grows in power and influence, the darker nature of the law becomes apparent. The lawful evil regent desires laws that promote *his* interests (since he believes *his* interests and the interests of his domain should coincide exactly). Any other interests become subservient to his own—and then they become illegal.

Lawful evil law holdings become tools of terror. While the lawful evil regent may not care one way or another about his subjects' happiness (as long as they do what he wants), his desires and inter-

ests almost always conflict with their general well-being. Subjects who play along and follow the lawful evil regent's dictates and desires nearly always end up using the law of the land as he does—to oppress and destroy their fellow subjects.

The perversity of the situation, however, manifests itself most strongly when the lawful evil regent reaches the pinnacle of his power. He has created his laws to benefit himself (he isn't just above the law; he *is* the law) and now he uses them to expand his control to absolute ends. If he cannot extend his influence beyond the borders of his domain, he begins eliminating all those within his control who would oppose him. He starts with those who actively hinder him (if there are any left), then moves on to the weak or innocent (especially if they are unpopular), and finally destroys his own loyal servants before they think to do the same to him. If left unchecked, the lawful evil regent, contained within a defined area, eventually destroys everything within his domain so that nothing will ever bring him down.

Unfortunately, most lawful evil regents recognize at least the potential for this conclusion to their efforts and seldom confine their activities to their own lands. They expand, using fear and hatred to drive their subjects, and they employ prejudice and avarice as powerful motivational tools. With their command of their own legal structure, they can become impressive threats to their neighbors quickly and effectively, before their true natures are fully detected.

## chaotic evil

On the surface, there isn't much difference between a chaotic evil and a lawful evil law holding. Both put the good of the regent above the good of the province, but the lawful evil regent actually equates the good of the province with his own well-being. Chaotic evil regents harbor no such illusions.

A chaotic evil law holding emphasizes individual strength and power. The chaotic evil regent promotes the "might makes right" ideal that got him where he is right now. Of course, the chaotic evil regent also defines what "right" is, so one cannot expect a level playing field from him.

The regent's subjects live

in fear. They are afraid to act for fear of violating some “law” they probably know nothing about. The regent’s laws and decrees are often left intentionally vague, so he can interpret them any way he sees fit. Unlike even the lawful evil ruler, the chaotic evil law regent gains as much control over his realm through confusing his subjects as through terrorizing them.

Even the most devious chaotic evil regent must channel his desires into domain management. To an outsider, a chaotic evil realm may appear independent and well-managed, but anyone spending any time under the law holdings learns the truth. Fear and ignorance are the tools of this law regent.

## neutral evil

Chaotic evil law holdings are terrifying and unpredictable; lawful evil law holdings bear the mark of fascism and tyranny. Neutral evil law holdings, however, maintain the purity of true evil.

The neutral evil regent revels in evil for its own sake. The balance between law and chaos takes a distant back seat to the promotion of the evil ideal. The most unselfish of the evil regents, the neutral evil law regent serves a more insidious master.

The subjects of this domain probably know that every law and every decree passed by their regent is intended to make their lives miserable. Only those who glorify evil can exist comfortably within an area dominated by a neutral evil law holding, and only for as long as they continue to serve evil consciously. One slip, and the neutral evil regent sacrifices them to the evil he serves.

A neutral evil regent seeks to actively create a legal structure that traps the individual and the province alike. The laws that do exist bend back on themselves, serving not the public good, but the public evil. They are not as obvious as the fascism of the lawful evil province, nor as direct as the chaotic evil one, but more comprehensively evil than both.

## the character class influence

Technically, any regent can control law holdings, though warriors gain the most benefits from these do-

mains. In any case, the character class of the controlling regent may affect the nature of the law holding.

### fighter

Since warriors gain the most benefits from controlling law holdings, fighters probably rule most of the law domains on Cerilia at any given time. When they do not also rule the provinces where their law holdings exist, they tend to turn their militaristic impulses inward. They take a great interest in policing the physical territory of their domains, scouring the area for those who act outside their law.

Fighter law regents (in the same territory) often clash with each other, even when their alignments and general motives agree. Often, however, they are able to forge strong alliances and police their domains that much more effectively. These law regents tend toward the more direct approach—whether in rulership or diplomacy, they use the power of their position to get things done.

A typical fighter-controlled law holding tends to have a central power base (the fighter’s home in small domains, or a castle in larger ones). The fighter probably has at least tacit control over some military units (if he isn’t the province ruler, these may default to the realm regent, but he could have command of some of them), or at least a band of henchmen or hirelings he can count on. Sheriffs, knights, and constables tend to be fighter law regents.

### paladins and rangers

Both paladins and rangers run their law domains in much the same way their fighter cousins do, but with a few added twists.

Paladins, being either lawful good (following Haelyn) or chaotic good (Cuiraécen), put their alignments and beliefs forth as moral standards they use to measure the inhabitants of their domains. They crusade, inside their own domains and out, with the intent of swaying toward the “right” those who do not agree with their beliefs. Since paladins are good characters, they usually persecute only those who actively pursue evil goals.

Rangers often focus their efforts on the protection and ordering of the wilderness within their domain. While they may have no legal influence in such areas, they seek to extend their control and protection outside of their law holdings and toward the wilderness. This does not mean they want to increase the level of the province and “civilize” the area—they just want to know more

about all areas of their domain.

Territorially, rangers tend to have the safest wilderness areas of all the law regents, but the wildest “civilized” areas as well. Their law holdings begin as fairly informal gathering areas and seldom progress much beyond that. Even when a ranger law regent’s domain extends to all corners of his province, he seldom likes to build a recognizable focus for his law, tending to spread it throughout the realm.

## priests

Characters from the priest class can be very effective (and sometimes very scary) as law regents. While they aren’t as talented as fighters regarding law management (they receive only half the Regency Points), they do have other aptitudes. Usually, when a priest controls a law holding in an area, he may have a temple holding nearby as well. If he doesn’t, he probably follows some temple as a vassal or an ally.

Priests order their law holdings after the ideals of their patron deities. Haelyn’s priests, for example, may be of any lawful or good alignment, but they tend to rule their law holdings in a way they think Haelyn would approve (in other words, both lawful and good). While a lawful neutral priest of Haelyn may not be able to keep up this effort on his own, his followers will probably make up as much of the difference as they can.

Priests become frightening theocrats when they confuse their faith with the law. Often, law holdings ruled by priests emphasize worship of the “right” deities by their subjects—using legal means. When the priest is of good alignment, this emphasis might stop at encouragement. Neutral and evil priests use the powers at their disposal, with few, if any, scruples.

## rogues

Within the rogue character class, usually only thieves can control law holdings with any effectiveness. (Bards generally don’t have the temperament for it). They can become effective administrators but, more often than not, they lean toward corruption and profiteering.

A thief law regent will probably turn his law holdings into another way to make money. This strategy isn’t necessarily bad (especially when the thief has a good alignment), but it does cause some confusion among the populace. A neutral good thief regent who controls the law holdings of a province, for example, will focus on the laws of commerce, promoting the good of free enterprise rather than addressing the troubles and

tribulations of the individual or the society.

As with priest regents, thieves tend to control law holdings only where they have other interests as well. When a thief regent controls law and guild holdings in the same area, conflicts of interest become evident. It would not be unusual for even a good thief regent to issue decrees making it illegal to buy goods from any guild other than the ones he controls. He might do this because all the other guilds are illegal cheats, but he probably does it because he can.

## wizards

Although wizards generally have little innate ability to manage law holdings (they gain absolutely no Regency Points from such holdings), they can control law holdings if they so choose. Usually, a wizard holds law interests to complement a rather powerful source network. He gains Regency Points from his sources and uses the influence of his law holdings to gain Gold Bars.

Wizards can become powerful law regents. They tend to concentrate their holdings around their own bases of power, seldom ruling more than one or two high-level law holdings (since that would require high province ratings and, necessarily, low source levels). Still, the influence they wield through use of their spellcasting abilities more than compensates for the relative ineffectuality of their decrees.

Wizards seldom share control of law in any given province—at least, not by choice. Powerful wizards may (and often do) employ vassals who actually gain more benefits from running law holdings than they do, but they don’t like to split up the law holdings in individual provinces. That would mean higher province levels and less meb-haigh for their spellcasting use.

# law regents vs. province rulers

In most cases, the most powerful law regent in an area also rules the province. Law is supposed to be a tool by which the province regent enforces his will. However, polit-

ical situations and the division of power don't always work out that way.

For whatever reason, sometimes the law of a realm becomes divided between the province ruler and the law regent. The question of who is more powerful in the area becomes an important, and not easily answered one.

## the power of law

Think of the law regent as the head of the civil authority (or, in the case of many law regents, a civil authority). The law regent has local power.

He polices the province in which his holdings lie, and makes law and policy for those people who respect his holding. He might be a local sheriff, a knight of the realm, even the lord of the land, but his power derives from local authority.

Because of this local authority, the law regent can make very specific laws and decrees that affect the internal workings of a realm. He can contest others' holdings, declare activities legal or required, and file claims against other regents. He has the power of interference on a local and powerful level.

## the provincial power

When a character rules a province, he assumes control over the *entire* province and treats it as one entity comprising many parts. He can tax the province and can even make his own laws and regulations within the province, but without the local power of law, he has nothing to directly back him up.

He can, however, bring in the army.

In a way, that's about as subtle as the province ruler can get. He can threaten to occupy his own provinces and close down any holdings within them or trade routes going out, but he can't perform smaller, more direct operations on his own. His decrees should not have nearly the effect of a law regent's, unless he is willing to risk a shift in loyalty by calling in troops.

However, the province ruler often can deal with the world on a macro scale more effectively than a regent who controls only law holdings. In a way, the local law regent fits the "big fish, small pond" analogy. Within his domain, he is very powerful; without, he cannot affect much on his own.

For this reason, law regents generally at least try to work with their realm regents. They know that their authority is local and that, without the province ruler's good will, they could be shut down in a few months. Likewise, the province ruler knows that, if he did shut down all the law holdings in his domain, he would just have to rebuild them again or do without any local authority.

## a final word

While it may be easier and more practical to consider a province's strongest law regent also its ruler, it isn't entirely realistic or even more fun. As an historical/legendary example, think of Prince John and the Sheriff of Nottingham. Both worked toward the same, basic goals (the domination of England and the pursuit of Robin Hood), but both had different means and considerations for achieving their desires. Sometimes, even though the sheriff was the prince's vassal, they came into conflict, got into each other's way, and generally made the legends more fun than if they had been one entity.

# domain actions

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*"The art of diplomacy is really quite simple, your highness. You merely determine what your adversary most wants out of the exchange, and then devise a way to make him think that's what he's getting."*

—Karrel Bernschwafer, diplomatic adviser

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**L**earning how to use domain actions effectively makes a regent a successful regent and his realm a powerful realm. Throughout Cerilia's history, many regents have settled for merely keeping their realms together and performing only the most obvious (or easiest) domain actions for minimal gain at minimal risk. While this strategy works in most cases, when events and circumstances (not to mention other rulers) conspire to make life difficult for a conservative or beginning regent, that character finds himself in a world of trouble.

To be successful, a regent must be aggressive but not overbearing, diplomatic but firm, strong but yielding. The following section describes some strategies for regents who would be more than caretakers for their realms.

## employing specific actions

The domain action remains the most powerful tool a regent possesses within the frame of the *BIRTHRIGHT* game. Even armies cannot accomplish all the goals of a regent, while domain actions, properly applied, can. A wise regent knows how to most effectively use each domain action available to him.

## adventure

Most regents win renown as adventurers and heroes before they assume the throne of a kingdom—at least, most NPC regents do. Player

character regents often begin the game at first level. They must establish themselves as powerful individuals if they want to deter challenges to their authority and honor.

Province rulers, and regents in general, should try to *adventure* often—with an eye toward quests that further not only their own personal concerns, but those of their realm and the domains of their allies. Once a regent sweats blood with an ally, fighting back-to-back against a common foe, he knows the mettle of his friends.

Adventuring regents stand a stronger chance of attracting powerful allies and henchmen. If a PC regent wants to create lieutenants he can trust, and entice other regents into trusting him and believing in his personal strength, he adventures. Adventuring regents also benefit domestically: When a regent personally leads the party that eliminates a band of monsters and saves a town, word gets around. The regent should see an up-swing in loyalty and an increase in the amount of taxes or tithes he collects (at least temporarily).

## agitate

Agitation can be a powerful weapon. Only province rulers—kings and queens of realms—have to worry about the loyalty of their charges, but anyone can agitate for or against them.

Unfortunately, most province rulers have better things to do than agitate on their own behalf: It's expensive (if done right) and it has a real effect only if the province ruler is already in trouble (or looking for it). Defensively, positive agitation keeps a realm secure but it also “wastes” an entire action.

Landless regents (those whose domains comprise only holdings, not the provinces in which they lie) should offer to agitate for their province rulers if they want to strengthen alliances. Landless regents tend to have fewer demands on how they spend their domain actions, and they can benefit from the goodwill of their province rulers. A realm regent, in turn, should encourage those with holdings in his realm to agitate on his behalf. The ruler thereby spends no money or time on the action but gains the benefit. He can then engage in a few less popular actions or raise taxes without fear of reprisal from his subjects.

## build

When regents *build* things, they should do so for a purpose. Realm regents tend to build roads and bridges for the benefit of other regents in the province as well as themselves—guildmasters, for example, need roads to run trade routes even as armies benefit from roads when they move.

As a result, only realm regents interested in gaining favor with other regents tend to build entirely on their own initiative. After all, if a guildmaster wants a road so he can establish a trade route, let *him* pay for at least part of it—either with gold, Regency Points, or some other consideration, or by expending his own action instead of the realm regent using his. Province rulers should support their allies, but they also have to think toward building a future for themselves.

Creative regents can build all manner of interesting structures. A regent might choose to build an edifice or “work of wonder” to attract trade or support for his holding. For example, a regent who controls a trade port might choose to build a giant lighthouse. He could have to spend upwards of 3d6 GB to construct the “work of wonder,” but he could gain a modifier to the number of Gold Bars he receives in taxes or trade, and the DM might increase the amount of Regency Points he gains per turn because people flock to see the edifice—and support him for building it.

## contest

A particularly vicious attack in some circumstances, the *contestation* needn’t cripple a defending ruler. Realm regents, for a small price in loyalty, can bring in their armies and occupy their own provinces—shutting down their enemies’ holdings. While this response might not work as effectively as resisting the contest action, it could be less expensive in the long run.

Generally, contesting another’s holding is like declaring war. A successful contest action robs the victim of Regency Points, Gold Bars, and other support from that holding.

A bidding war can get ugly and expensive very fast. In most cases, regents can use the contest action as a threat or negotiating tool, rather than actually performing it.

## create holding

Realm regents should rule more than just their provinces. If possible, they should rule most or all of the law holdings in the area. If they do not personally rule the law of their provinces, they should encourage their allies and vassals to do this for them.

Of course, creating lots of holdings is expensive and time-consuming. In several regions of Cerilia, realm regents have found certain methods more expedient than others. For example, in Rjurik, realm regents often have vassals or allies (jarls) who rule law holdings. Granted, these jarls keep many of the Regency Points they collect as law regents, and sometimes need support from province taxes, but they look after their holdings closely and manage all internal affairs. The king or queen of the entire realm has only to watch out for internal disruptions and outside problems.

Still, if a realm regent does not establish some holdings of his own, he can quickly find himself beholden to many subordinates. He won’t gain as much regency as he needs, and he might find his most powerful allies and vassals looking at his rulership with hungry eyes. A realm regent who doesn’t actually rule anything within his own domain becomes a political puppet.

## declare war

Too many regents think war solves all their problems. Attacking and conquering other realms might bring benefits, but it also violates a certain code among rulers. Other realm regents see a conqueror as a threat, and unless the conquering regent settles down quickly, he can make unnecessary enemies out of formerly disinterested parties.

Still, war sometimes can be the only way to expand a realm or defend a political or economic position. If possible, a ruler should gain the support of all landless regents in the area. If the rulers of guild, law, source, and temple holdings support an invader or defender—even if the support extends only to keeping out of the fight entirely—the war becomes much simpler.

With luck (and a little firm negotiating), landless allies can be more powerful weapons than armed units. A guildmaster, for example, can provide much-needed espionage (spying, assassination, and terrorism) for a military campaign. Priests can rally the commonfolk to support the war (with agitation and their own levies), and wizards can cast realm, battle, and conventional spells to support the war effort. And in many

cases, allied landless regents gain the greatest rewards. The military-minded regent who gains their support will reward them (if he's smart) by eliminating or suppressing their competition and supporting their own nonmilitary expansion.

## decree

More than any other lord, the realm regent issues decrees that carry weight. While a guildmaster or even a law regent can issue important political statements, the realm regent's decrees affect an entire land, not just a holding or group of holdings. The word of a king echoes loudly across the realm, unlike the voice of a landless regent.

Since decree is such a catch-all domain action, it can be exploited or virtually ignored. Creative regents use the decree action to solve or institute solutions to problems that might otherwise seem virtually unsolvable.

Decrees often take the form of laws—whether laws for the realm or for particular holdings. The player and the DM should both keep track of all decrees made by a regent because they can affect future actions directly. For example, a law regent might decree it illegal to enlist in a realm regent's army. If the law regent controls all the law in a particular province, virtually all of the people in that province will recognize the law (they might not follow it, but they'll recognize it), making it very difficult—if not impossible—for the realm regent to recruit troops in that province. As long as the decree stays in effect, the prohibition holds.

In some cases, the DM might consider certain decrees to lose effect over time. In the above example, the law regent might have something against that particular realm regent. If the law regent who made the decree dies and his successor doesn't repeal the decree with a new law of his own, the DM might state the people begin ignoring the old law, since the two regents seem to have nothing against each other now.

This domain action can make for excellent role-playing opportunities. If the DM and the players write up several decrees already in effect at the beginning of the campaign, and keep track of those they make later on, characters (both PCs and NPCs) can find themselves in interesting situations as they adventure in the area. Ancient laws might be ignored until a particular PC (unknowingly) breaks one—then chaos erupts.

## diplomacy

In general, regents are well-advised to spend at least one action every domain turn engaged in *diplomacy* (unless they have compelling reasons not to do so). Once every season, regents of all kinds should talk to at least a few of their neighbors, making deals or at least making contact.

As an optional rule, DMs might allow players to set up *embassies* through use of the *diplomacy* action. An embassy, staffed by a lieutenant of the realm or holding, can be considered in permanent contact with the realm it occupies. If a regent establishes an embassy, he can conduct *diplomacy* between the embassy and the realm in which it is located as a free action once per domain turn.

Establishing an embassy costs 1 GB plus half the expense of a regular court. (See court maintenance costs under "Domain Sequence of Play" in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*) For example, setting up an average embassy costs 1 GB plus 3 GB (half the cost of an average court), for a total of 4 GB.

Maintenance each domain turn costs half that of a regular court, with proportional modifiers to *diplomacy* actions. For example, spending 2 GB on maintenance for a "barely acceptable" embassy would generate a -2 penalty to *diplomacy* actions conducted in the embassy). Modifiers apply only to *diplomacy* actions involving officials of the realm in which the embassy lies or other holdings in that province.

**Note:** DMs may allow embassies to serve multiple functions. For example, the Baroness of Roesone might set up an embassy in her own capital of Proudglaive (in Caercas) to keep open permanent negotiations with el-Hadid's Port of Call Exchange, one of the largest guilds in Anuire. The DM might allow the embassy to also serve as a contact for other holdings located in the same province—the Impregnable Heart of Haelyn temple, for example.

However, the regent (in this case, the baroness) must pay an extra 1 GB per domain turn for every additional holding or province ruler the embassy serves (to cover additional facilities, staff, entertainment, etc.). So if the baroness wants to establish an average embassy to serve both the Port of Call Ex-

change and the Impregnable Heart of Haelyn, she must pay the base embassy cost of 4 GB (1 GB plus half the cost of maintaining an average court) plus 1 GB for the extra coverage, for a total of 5 GB. In subsequent domain turns she will pay 4 GB to maintain the embassy at average level.

The DM may require the regent to tailor the embassy to handle specific contacts or types of holdings. For example, Roesone's embassy serving the Port of Call Exchange could be inappropriate to handle diplomacy with the Impregnable Heart of Haelyn (guildmasters and priests might prefer different surroundings in which to conduct business). Or the DM could decide that the Port of Call Exchange and the other guild holdings in Caercas (the Spider River Traders) compete too directly to negotiate in the same embassy. The DM can, at his discretion, require the regent to set up two separate embassies.

## disband

When regents don't expect war, they often *disband* all or part of their troops in particular provinces. This tactic saves money but makes the regent slow to react if an aggressor strikes without warning. Still, regents who maintain gigantic armies often have to hoard their gold or tax heavily to support them.

Regents can disband holdings or fortifications as well. In some cases, a regent may disband a holding rather than fight repeated contest actions to keep it going. The regent stays ahead in his maintenance costs but loses out on Regency Points and tax or tithe collection in most of these cases.

In general, regents should look at all possible solutions before disbanding armies or holdings. While the disband action is free, recruiting new troops and building new holdings or fortifications isn't. If the regent can come up with creative ways of paying his bills that don't unduly strain his holdings and provinces, he should do so before disbanding anything.

## espionage

Good, reliable information is crucial to making intelligent decisions when running a realm. The word *espionage*—spying, assassination, terror-

ism—rings uncomfortably in the ears of most rulers, but the action is necessary. Protecting his kingdom should be the regent's first duty; obtaining reliable information makes that possible.

Thief regents have the best resources to spy on other regents and as a result can conduct espionage as a free action. All regents receive bonuses to their chance of success based on how many guild holdings they have in the area.

Regents who wish to use the espionage action can choose to set up *spy networks*. A spy network consists of people willing to reveal information to the regent's operatives (or the regent himself), often for little or no reward. Establishing a spy network requires time and effort, but can yield significant payoffs.

To establish a spy network, the regent must succeed in an espionage action in a particular province. The player must tell the DM beforehand that his sole objective is to set up a spy network, not to perform any other sort of espionage operation.

If the die roll exceeds the success number by 10 or more (after all modifiers have been added in), the regent has established a spy network in that province. He must pay 1 GB or 1 RP per domain turn to maintain the network (to "fund" his operatives) but as a result he can *double* all beneficial modifiers applied to espionage actions in that province.

For example, perhaps Orthien Tane of the Southern Anuire Shipping and Imports guild decides to set up a spy network in Roesone's province of Abbatuor. He has three guild holdings in Abbatuor, so he always gets a +3 bonus to his die roll (or -3 from the success number). No one else has any significant guild holdings there (el-Hadid has a level 0 holding). If Orthien Tane successfully sets up a spy network in Abbatuor, he can perform espionage actions as if he had a guild (6) there. When he spends Regency Points or Gold Bars to affect his success number, he doubles the modifiers he "buys."

The regent who possesses a spy network can also double the effectiveness of his guild holdings and/or RP and GB expenditures to assist other regents in espionage—or to block their attempts.

## finances

Regents gain money and treasure from a variety of sources—taxes, tithes, trade routes, adventuring—and they need to keep careful track of their funds. The *finance* domain action allows regents to convert cash and other goods (magical items, barter from tithes) into Gold Bars or gold pieces, depending on what they need at the time.

Regents should try to distinguish their domain's treasury from their own. Many subjects, particularly nobles, believe the treasury belongs to the realm, not the individual. They prefer to consider the regent a guardian, or custodian, of the domain's resources. Enlightened regents believe the same—or at least conduct their financial affairs as if they do.

A regent who maintains a distinction between his own treasures and those of his realm can use the *finance* action to actually turn a profit—occasionally. An adventuring regent might, for example, come upon a large hoard of gold and other treasures worth 10,000 gp (5 GB). If that regent makes a habit of segregating his personal treasures from the kingdom's treasury, he might make a personal loan to the treasury should circumstances warrant it. Under the finances domain action, the rules state that realms can borrow money from other realms or characters, and pay them back with interest. The regent could loan his realm money from his personal funds—and make a profit when the realm pays interest.

The standard rules for this process are simple. The regent needs to make a base success roll of 0 or higher to loan his own realm money (in other words, automatic success). Add +1 to the success number for every 1% in interest (over the course of a year) he wants to charge. For example, if the regent wants to charge 10% interest, he needs to roll a 10+. The regent can spend Regency Points on this action.

If the regent succeeds at the roll, the realm owes him the principal amount plus interest after one year passes. The regent can opt not to collect if the domain experiences financial difficulties (and might have to—he certainly shouldn't bankrupt his own realm). However, he cannot lend his realm any more money until the initial loan has been paid back. The regent, of course, can always give his own realm money from his personal treasury whenever he desires.

If the success roll fails, some explanation should be made for why the regent can't loan his own domain money at this time. In most realms, it means the regent's advisers or council of nobles didn't accept the offer. The regent can try again next domain turn, or lower the interest rate to 0% and automatically succeed.

In more despotic realms where the regent has the final say on everything, a failed roll means the loan goes through but causes the populace to lose faith in the crown. The commoners and nobles see the regent as merely profiteering at their expense and, during the next taxation or tithe attempt by the regent, they contribute up to 20% less gold and regency than expected (rolled).

## forge ley line

When wizards rule provinces rather than just maintain source holdings, they become their own best allies. Wizards should *forge ley lines* in every province they control, from every source they hold. Creating such a vast network may be expensive, but redundancy pays off. (For more information on forging ley lines, see *The Book of Magecraft* accessory). Using ley lines and realm spells as defensively as possible keeps other rulers from interfering with wizard regents.

In addition, wizard realm regents should set up ley lines into neighboring territories, if they can do so without provoking a hostile response. When a neighboring regent decides to meddle in the wizard's affairs, he can show that meddler the price of interference—on the meddler's own home ground.

Ley lines make effective weapons in many ways. Because only other wizards, or those with wizardlike abilities, can detect ley lines (and then, only when they look for them), a wizard realm regent can keep his enemies afraid, his neighbors nervous, and his allies respectful. The wizard regent with an extensive ley line network can create a reputation of power that few opponents want to test personally.

## fortify

Establishing *fortified* holdings, especially in border provinces, makes sense. Every realm regent should have at least one castle as well—one as strong and defensible as possible. Unfortunately, creating fortified holdings and castles might bankrupt the regent trying to protect his domain.

If at all possible, realm regents should try to encourage other holding rulers to pay for some of the construction of their castles and fortifications. Realm regents can do this remarkably well—guildmasters shouldn't mind supplying a few Gold Bars every turn to construct a castle if the realm regent will agree to build actions that promote trade. Loaning a guildmaster the use of the realm's ships (again, for trade purposes) can have the same effect.

Temple regents might agree to contribute for the privilege of being allowed to create their own troops. Most temples in Cer-

ilia have some interest in military activities, but they usually need the permission of their realm regents to build their own armies.

**Optional Rule #1:** To cut down on the time required to fortify a holding or build a castle, the DM may allow the contributions of additional regents to shorten the time necessary for construction. For example, if two regents agree to cooperate in building a castle (2), which costs 8 GB per level for a total of 16 GB, their work progresses at a rate of 1d6 GB per domain turn. If each agrees to contribute resources, the DM might allow *both* regents to roll 1d6 each turn, to reflect the increased effort.

**Optional Rule #2:** Cooperation could make building castles even more effective. If the DM allows this rule, multiple holdings could be fortified by the same castle or other fortification. When two or more regents decide to fortify their holdings at the same time (and to the same level), they can save Gold Bars and time building a linked fortification.

The cost of fortifying holdings is reduced to 3 GB per level *per regent* participating in the linked holding construction. The cost of castle construction is reduced from 8 GB to 7 GB per level when two or more regents cooperate in this way.

Construction of the fortification begins and continues as normal. All regents participating must build to the same level of fortification. During construction, however, the fortified holdings are only as complete as the lowest level achieved by any one regent.

For example, a guild regent, a law regent, and a temple regent each decide to fortify their holdings—a guild (3), law (2), and temple (2). They decide to build a linked fortification (2). Each must pay 3 GB per level, and work progresses at a rate of 1d6 GB per domain turn.

On the first turn, the guildmaster rolls a 6 and pays 6 GB—he has successfully completed his part of the work. Unfortunately, each of the other regents rolls a 1, so neither of them accomplish much. Overall, the linked fortification is still level 0.

On the second turn, the guildmaster can only wait while his partners work on their parts. The law regent rolls a 5, completing his section. Unfortunately, the priest rolls another 1, meaning he still hasn't finished even one level of construction. Although two-thirds of the linked fortification

is complete, it's still a level 0 fortification.

In most cases, this stalled construction pace won't happen. On average, three domain rulers cooperating to create a linked fortification should save at least one domain turn when creating level 2 or higher fortifications. But accidents happen.

**Note regarding both options:** Whenever regents cooperate to fortify holdings or build castles, they lose the option of spending extra Gold Bars to increase the building rate.

## grant

Regents often award grants to their loyal servants in return for successful service. Regents can bestow grants on anyone, anywhere, at any time and for any reason. However, the more a regent restricts the distribution of grants, the more special they become.

The *grant* domain action seldom has a direct effect on the campaign. Oftentimes, the grant awarded does little more than give a PC or NPC some sort of treasure, title, or award. However, for DMs and players concerned with realistic roleplaying, grants should be cherished as excellent role-playing opportunities.

For example, the PC ruler of Hjolvar might rule all the provinces and all the law holdings in that Rjurik realm. When one of his henchmen saves his life during an adventure, however, the regent might grant the NPC the title "Warrior of Kopingsdal." The regent designates the henchman as someone special in the annals of the realm—a protector of the city, perhaps—and this can have campaign repercussions. It should make the henchman feel pride and loyalty toward his ruler, and it could even increase the general goodwill and loyalty the regent receives from his nobles and commoners. The regent shows with his grant that he rewards loyal service.

Grants can have a more direct effect on the game, however. The henchman, for example, might be made the province ruler of Kopingsdal. This means he, not the PC regent, controls that province. Of course, the henchman still serves the regent—but has a degree of autonomy as well.

## hold action

Holding a domain action allows the acting regent to watch and see what other regents do during the game. This choice grants to PC an advantage, enabling him to respond to actual events instead of trying to predict them.

Realistically, since PC regents shouldn't really know what other regents are doing unless the action is fairly obvious, the Dungeon Master might restrict use of the *hold action* option. Above all, regents who hold actions should remember to use them—no regent should waste a domain action.

## investiture

When a regent *invests* another character with a province or a holding, he probably wants to gain that person as a vassal or, perhaps, an ally. While the regent gives up some of his own power, he benefits from having an ally with the ability to perform domain actions as often as the regent can. Depending on the regent's home region (Rjurik, Anuire, Vosgaard, Brechtür, or Khinasi), the practice of investing vassals is more or less common.

Other forms of this action—investing provinces, holdings, and bloodlines—takes place as circumstances warrant. For more information about investiture, see *The Book of Priestcraft* accessory.

## lieutenant

As explained in the “Able Assistance” chapter of this book, using the *lieutenant* domain action to create a trusted henchman who can help the regent run his domain might possibly be the best domain action the regent can initially perform. Having a lieutenant means having an extra domain action, an adventuring companion, and an independent adventurer all in one.

## move troops

Most regents *move troops* only in preparation for war, or after war has begun. This practice can be a mistake for several reasons.

First, when a regent moves troops, regents with holdings in the affected provinces notice this movement. They might not know how many units are moving or where, but they should have a good idea. These regents can then tell anyone they choose about this activity.

However, if a regent moves troops throughout his domain regularly (say, at least once a year), this movement might be overlooked by the casual observer. If Hogunmark wants to eventually invade the Realm of the White Witch, for example, the Queen of Hogunmark should move troops near the border and back again a few times. Eventually, the witch's informers

might see this as an ordinary pattern of activity and stop reporting it. Either that, or the White Witch herself might discount reports of “impending invasion,” thinking Hogunmark merely toys with her again.

Moving troops on a regular basis can also deflect espionage attempts. If a regent moves his armies in and out of different provinces, along with any lieutenants or henchmen he has commanding these troops, up-to-date reports of his armies' strengths will be more difficult for foes to obtain. Since espionage takes at least a month to perform successfully, the wary regent can change the strengths of his armies two or three times a year and throw off the reports just about every season. Then other espionage attempts—actually targeted at the armies or the commanders—might fail simply because the operating regent has no idea where his enemy is at any one time.

Finally, troops can engage armies that enter their provinces (using War Moves). An invading regent probably wants to get as deep into his enemy's territory as possible before engaging his enemy's army. If the troops move around often enough, an invader could stumble upon a point of strength while hoping to catch his enemy unawares.

## muster armies

When a regent *musters armies* in a province, he recruits from his own populace and perhaps from traveling warriors who hear his call to arms. He can raise a significant number of units (in proportion to the level of the provinces he rules) quickly. As a result, regents with primarily nonmilitary goals should keep the sizes of their armies to a minimum during peacetime. Recruiting can be costly, but maintaining units just for the sake of having an army isn't cost-effective.

As a general rule, regents probably want to maintain at least one “average” unit (infantry, or the equivalent) for every province they rule. While each province doesn't need to have one unit stationed in it at any given time, the borders should be patrolled. Regents worried about their neighbors might also choose to keep one above-average unit (elite in-

fantry, cavalry, etc.) on hand for every three provinces they must defend. Large realms should consider keeping cavalry and other fast-moving units centrally located so that they can respond to outside threats quickly.

## ply trade

Few regents will engage in the *ply trade* action on a regular basis. Nonregent characters might do so (since it is a character action, and costs nothing to perform), but regents have more weighty matters competing for their allotment of actions each domain turn. Still, a regent might perform these services to increase his own personal treasury. Wizards and priests do this more often than any other character class.

## research

Wizards and priests perform research actions as outlined in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*, the *PHB*, and the *DMG*. For more information, see also *The Book of Magecraft* and *The Book of Priestcraft* accessories.

## rule

Realm and nonrealm regents alike may *rule* (increase the levels of) their holdings as often as they want; realm regents may rule provinces once per domain turn.

If a regent has no competition for holding or province spots, he should consider spending at least one action per domain turn ruling up his holdings or provinces. They generate more money, more Regency Points, and more “clout” for the regent; the higher a holding’s level, the more the regent can do with it.

If a realm regent wants to rule up a province, he shouldn’t pay for it himself. Granted, the increased province level yields additional tax revenue for the realm regent, but others who control holdings in the province have the potential for gain as well.

Since the realm regent is the only one who can increase the level of a province, he should make the other regents in the area (who all benefit by being able to increase their holdings beneath his “cap”) contribute to the effort. They might not

agree to foot the entire bill, but they should contribute something.

At times, ruling provinces or holdings can work against regents in their relations with other regents. Wizards, for example, get annoyed when realm regents rule up their province levels—automatically decreasing the magic potential of the province(s) in the process. If a ruler wants to keep the source regents in his area happy (a very good thing), he may want to negotiate beforehand. In many cases, realm regents give their wizard allies a relatively uncivilized province or two. The mages establish high-level sources there and use them to fuel ley lines into more civilized terrain. One province in a large realm, protected as a natural and magical “reserve,” strengthens alliances all around.

If a nonrealm regent rules up his holdings in an area, he may take prospective holdings away from his competitors. While this effect is normally considered a good thing—making oneself stronger while keeping the other guy at the same level—it can cause problems. If one particular regent in an area seems to increase his power more quickly than others, alliances spring up overnight. Suddenly, the successful regent finds his holdings contested and his other interests in trouble. Negotiation, again, can prevent this.

## trade route

Only regents with guild holdings can use the *trade route* domain action. However, guildmasters sometimes find themselves at the mercy of realm regents for the wherewithal to set up these lines of gold.

In order for a guilder to set up an overland trade route, all provinces it crosses must have roads. To pay for them, realm regents should charge some sort of consideration or tolls for the use of these roads. They also might attempt to persuade local guilders to pay for all or part of the build action necessary to create a road in the first place.

Overseas trade routes can be exploited in the same way. Ships are military units, and realm regents tend to discourage other regents in their provinces from having military units without their permission. As a result, realm regents can charge fees for use or operation of ships at port cities.

Finally, the trade route thrives off province levels, not the level of the guild holdings involved. Since the realm regent assumes responsibility for raising and/or maintaining province levels, he should receive some remuneration

from the trade route made possible, or more profitable, by his efforts.

Realm regents can reasonably charge guild-masters up to 25% of the Gold Bars generated by a trade route beginning or ending in one of their provinces. They can charge more from a guildmaster who is not an ally (though more than 50% likely would make the guildmaster wonder whether the trade route is worth maintaining), or less if they want to help the guild along. Guildmasters, in turn, should expect this sort of capitalization—they should understand that every ruler wants to have a nice, sizeable treasury.

## training

*Training* is often dismissed as an action used by regents who cannot think of anything else to do. While this generalization might be true, a good regent might have one action every few domain turns where, because of good management and planning, he doesn't have to do anything. As a result, he can reap the benefits of his own careful administration and use the resources of his realm to enhance his existing skills.

Learning new nonweapon proficiencies (especially those described in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rule-book*) always benefits the ruler. Improving other proficiencies certainly doesn't hurt either. And if the regent chooses to "work out" and increase his hit points, he's one step farther from "involuntarily abdicating."

## new domain actions

Consider these new domain actions *optional* and subject to DM approval. In some cases, the DM may wish to consider them "new knowledge" available only to certain realms (until other realms discover them through observation, trade, or espionage).

Most of the new domain actions contain examples suggesting their best use; many were created with specific strategies in mind. Some of the actions can be found individually in other *BIRTHRIGHT* accessories; they have been compiled here for ease of reference. If a new domain action also appears in another source, that source is listed in the description.

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**Exploratory Trade** Success: 20+  
Type: Domain, Character Base Cost: 1  
RP, 5 GB

### *Havens of the Great Bay*

Any regent with a guild holding in the same province as a seaport (a coastal province rated 4 or higher) can use this domain action to take a speculative leap into the unknown realm of exploratory trade. The regent loads trade goods (represented by the total number of Gold Bars invested) onto one or more ships and sails away or sends them off, hoping to encounter someone on a distant shore who is willing to trade for goods that are rare and valuable to the guildmaster. A regent can engage in exploratory trade no more than once in four domain turns from a single province (a regent with guild holdings in multiple seaports may attempt this once per four domain turns from each province).

Certain modifiers apply to these efforts:

- *Members of the guilder subclass receive an automatic +1 to the success roll for this venture.* (This action represents what guilders do best.)
- *If the regent accompanies the voyage, he gains a +2 bonus to the roll.* Personal attention in negotiations is beneficial.
- *If a guilder lieutenant accompanies the ship, add a +1 bonus to the roll.* This modifier counts only if the regent does not travel with the ship. Multiple guilder lieutenants do not increase the modifier further.

Unlike most domain actions, many outcomes are possible. The regent can spend Regency Points and Gold Bars to help ensure the success of the voyage, but the action is quite risky.

*On a natural roll of one, disaster occurs. The ships sink, are attacked, or disappear along with all cargo. The regent returns safely after two months, but lieutenants and ships are probably lost (DM's fiat).*

*If the die roll fails, the voyage fails to produce a profit. Perhaps no one could be found to buy the merchandise, or perhaps the goods could not be sold for a profit. The Gold Bars invested in the cargo (but not the voyage) are returned after two months. Any Gold Bars and Regency Points spent to influence the die roll and ensure a suc-*

cessful voyage are lost.

If the die roll beats the success number the regent's gamble pays off. The regent receives a profit: Multiply the level of the seaport by the number of Gold Bars invested. The regent receives that number of Gold Bars from the voyage after two months of exploring and trading.

**Example:** Theofold, guildmaster of Müden's Brecht Seelundkaufen, decides to hire a ship and send his wares on an exploratory trade mission. He sends the ship out of Allesrecht, a level 6 province. Theofold can afford to fill a standard Brecht roundship with 6 GB of cargo. He spends his initial 5 GB and 1 RP to initiate the voyage, 6 GB on cargo, and another 10 RP to ensure success. Theofold also sends a guilder lieutenant on the voyage. He adds a total of 11 (10+1) to the success roll. He needs a 9 or higher on the die to succeed.

Theofold rolls a 14; the voyage is a success. Two months later, his lieutenant returns with a ship packed full of rare herbs, silks, and gemstones—all unheard of in Brecht lands. By multiplying Allesrecht's province rating of 6 by the number of Gold Bars invested in cargo (also 6), Theofold determines that his ships return with 36 GB of rare merchandise. Considering he invested 7 GB and 11 RP in the project, that's a healthy profit.

The DM is encouraged to describe the ships' voyage to the players, detailing ports the ships visited and persons encountered. DMs may also opt to abandon the die roll mechanic altogether and create an adventure around the exploratory trade action.

**Note:** The exploratory trade domain action requires two months to be resolved. The ships must travel great distances to make such expeditions pay off, and sometimes must stop several times to bargain, restock, and refit. As a result, if a regent accompanies a voyage personally, he should be considered out of touch with his domain during that time. He cannot perform domain actions or resolve random events for two months. His lieutenants and vassals, however, can act on his behalf.

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#### Improve Unit Success: Special

Type: Domain, Realm

Base Cost: 1RP, 1 GB

The improve unit action is so detailed, it takes up most of the "Military Matters" chapter of this book. See that chapter for a description.

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#### Ley Link Success: Automatic

Type: Free Base Cost: 1 RP

*The Book of Magecraft*

This action enables a regent wizard to temporarily transfer control of one or more of his sources and/or ley lines to another regent wizard. The lending wizard must specify which source(s) and/or ley line(s) he intends to share with the borrower.

The borrowing wizard must meet two criteria. First, he must obtain permission from the wizard who controls the source(s) and/or line(s) he wants to borrow. (This permission can be coerced.) Second, he must already have a connection with Cerilia's mebhaigh by controlling at least one source of his own somewhere on the continent.

This action forms an immediate link between the borrowing wizard and the sources/ley lines. The link lasts for two action rounds, during which the lending wizard cannot access the borrowed sources and lines. The lending wizard still retains control of his holdings and network—he is just allowing the other wizard to borrow the energy.

Should the lending wizard want to break the link before the end of its duration, he can do so by performing another ley link action, this time linking himself to the holdings.

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#### Move Ships Success: Automatic

Type: Free Base Cost: None

*Cities of the Sun, Naval Battle Rules*

A regent can order his ship to sail anywhere he wants. Since a vessel's maintenance cost includes provisions, ordering it to move costs a character nothing. Ships can move to support trade by sea, ferry troops, take characters on adventures, or perform other missions.

**Note:** Once a regent has committed ships to normal movement, they become ineligible for use during War Moves that follow that action round. However, if someone else uses the declare war action to attack the regent's ships or provinces, he may choose to return a ship to the position it held at the beginning of the action round by paying a 1 GB penalty. The ship cancels its intended move and becomes available for fighting in the war that follows the normal action round sequence.

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#### Move Troops by Sea Success: Automatic

Type: Free Base Cost: 1 GB

*Cities of the Sun, Naval Battle Rules*

A regent who wants to move his troops via ship doesn't have to risk a success roll for ship avail-

ability and the other factors mentioned in the move troops action in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*. He can use his ships to transport companies of troops automatically, up to the ship's normal capacity for troops and movement. (Mounted forces such as knights or cavalry count as two units each.) The troops must embark at a port, paying 1 GB per five units; the cost doesn't depend on how far the ships move, since the regent already owns them. (A ship can carry its maximum troop and cargo capacity simultaneously.)

Once the troops are aboard, the regent uses a move ships action (above). The troops can disembark at any coastal province. However, landing troops in enemy-held provinces requires a declare war action and the execution of four War Moves, just like a normal land invasion would. Each full week at sea prevents the troops in question from participating in one land-based War Move that action round.

Ships that move troops by sea face the same limitations imposed by the move ships action; carrying troops during an action round makes a ship ineligible for movement during any War Moves later that round.

**Rivers:** Regents can move troops along rivers, as long as one bank is friendly or they have permission from the ruler of one bank.

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**Progress** Success: Special  
Type: Realm Base Cost: 1 RP, 1 GB

Any regent can attempt to introduce progress to his domain through numerous means. The use of a progress domain action reflects the government's support of efforts to advance the realm's knowledge and/or worldly power. Social, technological, economic, and magical progress can all occur through this action.

Progress of any type can (and should) be difficult and time-consuming. The progress action represents breakthroughs of (possibly) Cerilia-shaking influence. The DM and players must exercise good judgment and restraint when using this domain action.

**Social advances:** Any new form of government or social construction not generally known to Cerilia could be considered an "advance." The advance might hold some drawbacks, but benefits someone. (The regent probably hopes it somehow benefits himself.) Dictatorships, for example, allow the ruling regent to be more forceful and direct with decrees, diplomacy, and rule actions (gaining pluses to these actions) than most royal figures, but they might decrease loyalty ratings and the overall amount of Regency Points and Gold Bars that can be collected.

Democracy, on the other hand, increases productivity and morale among the peasants, but causes problems for hereditary rulers.

**Technological advances:** Advances such as developing better metallurgy or new mining techniques could increase the abilities of army units, better trade, and increase the amount of taxes a regent can collect from his domain. They might make the domain a target for espionage and even War Moves, however, as neighboring regents attempt to learn the secrets of new technology. Extreme advances (like the invention of gunpowder or the steam engine) that could radically change the face of Cerilia are discouraged.

**Magical advances:** Spellcasting regents (priests and wizards) and those who employ magic-wielding lieutenants and advisers could use this action to create better versions of existing spells or incorporate magical processes into normally mundane operations to make them run more smoothly or quickly.

**Economic advances:** Establishing a better, more standardized currency keeps forgery and "coin-shaving" at a minimum. Creating or discovering new markets and products for trade could increase the value of all the regent's trade routes and/or holdings.

The DM determines the success number, which in general should be a daunting 50 or higher (unless the advance can be logically achieved by a simple improvement of existing standards). Progress on such a large scale is difficult and expensive, requiring considerable governmental subsidies—in the form of Gold Bars and/or Regency Points.

However, when a ruler spends regency or gold to reduce this number, he does not lose all of his expenditures should he fail the roll. Instead, he can keep *half* of the bonus he generates for as long as he spends at least the 1 RP and 1 GB base cost to maintain the attempt at progress. Each action round that a ruler maintains the progress attempt, he receives another success roll without it counting as one of his actions allotted in the domain turn. Even if the success number is higher than a 20, a "natural 20" always succeeds.

If the regent chooses, he can spend *more* regency or gold in later action rounds to increase the bonus to his success roll, provided

that he has maintained the attempt since his initial progress action. By spending the additional resources the regent gives the project his full attention for that month—in other words, the attempt counts as his action for that round.

Should a regent fail his first attempt at progress and cease maintaining the effort for even a single action round, any Regency Points or Gold Bars invested is lost. He must start over from scratch the next time he attempts progress.

The DM and the player should discuss different types of progress and the effect any advance would have on the game. In general, game mechanic modifiers should be small—adding +1 to the success chance of certain domain actions, for example, shouldn't unbalance the game. In general, all progress should pay off—over time.

As with all advances, no guarantees exist. The player may tell the DM what he hopes to achieve with the advance, but things might not always work out the way the player expects. Progress can bring problems as well as boons. A regent who decides to create a social advance—like introducing low-level democracy to a region—could hope to bolster the loyalty of his people and the overall success of his realm (with positive modifiers to diplomacy, decree, and trade route actions) could end up fashioning a knife for his back if the people decide they *really like* democracy and don't want him as hereditary ruler anymore.

**Example:** The Emira of Khourane wants her engineers to devise an alternative to the *hippocamped, dirt road*—one that will allow her armies to move faster over land and increase the effectiveness of her guilders' trade. The person playing the emira states that she, essentially, wants to “invent” paved or cobble roads (or if those exist already in the area, better versions of the same).

The DM determines that the goal isn't too far a leap in progress, so he assigns a relatively low success number of 30.

On the emira's first attempt at progress, she goes all-out, spending 1 RP and 1 GB for the base cost, and another 20 (RP and GB combined) to give her a +20 bonus to the roll.

She needs to roll only a 10+ to succeed. Unfortunately, she rolls a 3 and fails miserably. The DM tells her that the engineers must develop some new roadway base unknown in Khourane, and need more time.

Still, since she

made the initial investment, the emira decides to continue her support of the project. For the next two action rounds, she maintains the progress attempt by paying the base cost each time. She gets to keep half of the +20 bonus she bought already (+10), meaning she needs a 20+ on either roll (which she does not get) to succeed. Meanwhile, because she is only maintaining the attempt and not giving it her full attention, she is able to perform two other actions that domain turn.

However when the next season rolls around, the emira collects more Regency Points and Gold Bars in tribute and taxes, and can improve her chances once again. She pays the base cost to continue the research, and spends another 10 RP to bump the modifier for success to a +20 bonus again—meaning she needs to roll a 10+. She rolls a 14, and the engineers create the new roadway technology.

The DM declares the emira will have to rebuild all her old roads if she wants to get the bonus of new, paved roads in her domain, but he decides the advance allows her to move troops faster over any terrain that features the new road (all movement costs are reduced by 1, to a minimum of 1 per province). He also declares that any trade route established using these roads benefits from the new technology, increasing the profitability of the overall trade route by +1 GB. While it may take the emira a long time to pay for the advance, eventually she will make a profit.

**Acquiring another's advances:** The secrets of progress cannot remain secret for long. In many cases regents try to recoup the cost of their progress by selling the secrets to other regents. This can be done easily as a diplomacy action.

Of course, some regents might not want to pay for another's hard work and expenditures. Advances can be stolen; rules for stealing an advance vary with individual circumstances. A regent might simply perform a successful espionage action to gain the “plans” for the advance and then attempt to duplicate it in his realm (through a progress domain action of his own, with a large reduction in the success number). Or the DM might determine that the attempt requires an adventure—or a war, or some other means.

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#### Sea Trade Route

Success: 10+  
Type: Domain, Realm Base Cost: 1 RP, 1 GB  
Cities of the Sun, Naval Battle Rules

The BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook uses a simple abstraction to represent sea routes: any coastal province (4) or higher can have a trade route to the nearest sea lane worth half the province's rat-

ing or to another province worth the average of the two ratings. The following material expands the create trade route action.

**Ports:** Any coastal or river province (4) or higher counts as a port and can constitute one end of a sea trade route. The other end of the route must be a coastal province within one month's sail of the port and must have a different terrain type or be occupied by people of a different culture. For purposes of this action, players should assume a ship can travel 30 maritime areas in one month of sailing.

A port can support as many sea trade routes as land trade routes, so a coastal province (7) can support three land and three sea trade routes. The regent of a port with a designated sea trade route can bar the trade route with a decree action at any time. A sea trade route can never start from any coastal province (3) or lower.

**Value:** A sea trade route is worth the average of the two provinces involved, rounded up. A sea trade route to "parts unknown" (as described in the *Rulebook*) is worth half the level of the port province.

**Ships:** Naturally, sea trade requires ships capable of carrying cargo. Every ship has a cargo capacity described in terms of Gold Bars. To collect all the money a sea trade route creates, the route's owner must have ships able to carry enough cargo. Additional GB worth of cargo, in excess of the ships' cargo capacity, are lost until the regent gets more or bigger ships. (A ship can carry both its maximum cargo capacity and troops at the same time, if necessary.) The trade route's owner does not have to own the ships involved in a trade route—just have the use of them.

**Availability:** A regent should allocate ships to sea trade routes during the "taxation and collection" step of the domain turn. These vessels are considered occupied with move ships actions each action round to carry out the turn's trade. If a ship leaves its trade route for another purpose, the regent must repay the money he collected this domain turn from cargo his ships never actually carried to port.

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**Trade Chain** Success: 10+  
Type: Domain Base Cost: 2 GB, 2 RP  
*Havens of the Great Bay*

Regents with established trade routes may use the trade chain action to extend their reach across the continent of Cerilia and beyond.

To create a trade chain, a regent forges a new trade route originating from the terminus of an existing trade route. This extra link increases the value of the trade route and may increase the dis-

tance a trade route can reach. Under normal circumstances, a sea trade route cannot extend more than 30 maritime areas; the trade route is limited by the time required to sail between the two points. In a trade chain, multiple cities, each 30 or fewer maritime areas away from each other, can be connected in a long, unlimited series of trade links.

**Example:** Theofold has holdings in the seaport province of Allesrecht, in the Brecht realm of Müden. Leivika, in Svinik (on the western coast of the Rjurik lands), is a city about 30 maritime areas from Allesrecht and roughly the limit of Theofold's sea trade route. But Theofold wants to trade with the City of Anuire in Avanil (on the southern coast of Anuire). He cannot reach the City of Anuire with a conventional trade route, but he can create a trade chain.

Theofold forges a sea trade route between Allesrecht, a province (6), and Leivika, a province (4). This nets Theofold 5 GB per domain turn. Theofold spends his next domain action building a trade chain from Leivika to Anuire. For the cost of 2 RP and 2 GB, he has a chance to link the City of Anuire to his trade route from Allesrecht.

To determine the value of any trade chain, calculate the average of all provinces involved in the chain, then add 1 GB for every province beyond the second. In the example above, Theofold linked three provinces: Allesrecht (6), Leivika (4), and the City of Anuire (10). The average is 7 (20 divided by 3, rounded up). One province is added beyond the second, so the 7 is increased to an 8. Thus, Theofold (who initiated the route) gains 8 GB every domain turn. In addition, the guilders who agreed to the trade routes collect 1 GB per province beyond the second each domain turn.

If another province is linked to the three already joined (at an additional cost of 2 RP and 2 GB), all four province ratings are averaged, then 2 GB are added to the result.

Like a simple trade route, the provinces involved in a trade chain must be of different terrain types or belong to different cultures (Brecht and Rjurik, or Anuirean and dwarven, for example). The DM may also allow links between provinces separated by great distances (signifying extreme changes in climate or conditions).

Trade chains are vulnerable to conditions in all connected provinces. If one of the trade links is

eliminated (for example, the guild holding in Anuire is contested successfully in two consecutive actions), they all suffer. The original trade route from the guild regent's home province would survive, but all forward trade links dissolve. In the case of Theofold's three-link example, the contesting of Anuire would leave the Allesrecht-Leivika route intact. If Leivika or Allesrecht were contested, however, the entire trade chain would dissolve.

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**Trade Service** Success: 10+

Type: Domain, Realm Base Cost: 1 RP/holding

A regent with any type of holding or province can exchange special services for gold, much as a guildmaster with a trade route can earn gold for goods. A regent with a holding in a particular province can make an agreement with any other regent in the same province (including a province ruler) to form a temporary financial alliance. Both regents gain gold if the enterprise succeeds.

Any types of holdings may cooperate. In story terms, the regents agree to use their strengths to complement each other's abilities—a wizard regent, for example, might ally with a law holder, using his spells and magical abilities to cut down on the amount of resources the law regent must expend to enforce his laws and maintain his holdings. In return, the law regent's troops or other followers protect the wizard's tower (or perhaps the wizard himself) from physical assault during a critical spellcasting period, thereby freeing the wizard of the need to hire his own guards or conjure them magically. Both holdings save money and resources; the resulting gain in Gold Bars reflects this cooperation and savings.

This domain action holds a few prohibitions:

- No regent may engage in a trade service agreement with his own holdings or those held by a vassal. It is assumed that his holdings already cooperate to their fullest extent.
- No holding (or province level) may participate in more than *one* trade service action per domain turn.
  - Both regents must agree to trade services for the action to succeed. If a PC tries to trade services with an NPC, the DM might require him to engage in diplomacy first.

The amount of gold generated by a successful trade service action is determined

by averaging the levels of the two holdings (or the province and a holding within it, if the province ruler is one of the parties). Round up fractions. The regents jointly receive this number of Gold Bars, to divide in whatever manner they see fit.

*For example, Gerad ibn Farid el-Arrasi, Prince-Paladin of Ariya, rules the province of Ariya (7). He reaches a trade service agreement with Omadi the Quick, guildmaster of the Gold Coast Coster, a level (3) holding in the province. The province and holding levels average 5, so the two regent receive 5 GB to share. Per the terms of their agreement, Gerad receives 3 GB and Omadi receives 2 GB.*

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## strategic planning

Domain actions work to best effect when they form part of a cohesive plan. Many regents think ahead one or two action rounds when determining how they will use a particular domain turn. However, a few farsighted rulers approach their administration like a chess game, plotting many moves in advance and combining different domain actions to achieve large-scale results.

Here, two of Cerilia's regents explain in their own words how they wove multiple actions into intricate plans to attain complex goals.

**Note:** So as not to interrupt the narrative structure of these reports, all game terms appear in brackets [*like this*]

## talbehr's tribute

*"I have always found that diplomacy and negotiation work best when accompanied by a solid *qfit* motive. I prefer to conduct negotiations with regents when I can present a clear object of gain to all parties involved. Though the unrefined diplomat may engage in cutthroat negotiations, achieving a successful outcome for as many parties as possible requires subtlety and skill."*

—Richard Talbehr, Count of Müden

Müden may be one of the most prosperous realms in Brechtür, but it costs considerable amounts of gold to keep it that way. When I divided rule of the kingdom between myself and Captain Reaversbane (in the interests of making Müden a more secure realm) I knew we would face problems that required joint attention. In this case, the cost of maintaining our combined armies and navies almost got the better of us.

Müden had experienced a hard winter. The Black Ice Bay remained frozen for nearly a month longer than usual, and after our seizure of the pirate-king Albrecht we had considerable expenses outstanding. Theofold, my lieutenant and the chief guildmaster of the realm, informed me that my treasury might not withstand a fiscal crisis. He suggested that I disband a few of my armed units (particularly the dwarven guard so graciously provided by King Graybeard of Baruk-Azhik) and focus on increasing taxation.

While this idea had merit, I shied away from it. We had just won a victory against piracy on the Great Bay, and the people were recovering from a particularly cruel winter. If I raised taxes to pay for the popular campaign against the pirates, it might no longer be remembered as a popular campaign.

So I called upon Theofold and Captain Reaversbane, and we contacted the rulers of Berhagen and Rheulgard [diplomacy action] I thought about inviting Justina, the ruler of Pashacht, but with hard feelings between her and Rheulgard still extant, I decided to leave her undisturbed for the moment.

We discussed trade. Theofold has made great innovations in sea trade recently, having negotiated from my ally Captain Reaversbane the use of royal naval vessels for long voyages, yet we maintained virtually no trade with our nearest land neighbors. I proposed a deal.

I, along with the rulers of Rheulgard and Berhagen, resolved to build roads and bridges through our provinces [build action] We would talk to our various guildmasters and persuade them to supply the monetary outlay [Gold Bars] while we provided the workers and popular support [Regency Points] We would do this in enough provinces so that our guildmasters could then extend overland trade routes [trade route and trade chain actions] The guilders would assume the cost of establishing the routes and supply us each with a small tithe to cover road maintenance [1 to 2 GB per trade route per domain turn, depending on the worth of the route]

In exchange for this cooperation, I would lend the Baron of Berhagen two units of Müden's infantry. He could use these units to scour his mountains and, ideally, shut down Auslawsen and her Mountain Brigands. He would pay for the upkeep of these units while I continued to pay their salaries. [For the next domain turn, the baron and the count split the maintenance cost of the two infantry units.]

For Rheulgard, I agreed to use my contacts with the Banshegh—excuse me, Justina of Pashacht. Rheulgard wanted a treaty in which Justina agreed to contain the Banshegh's destruc-

tion in her own domain, or pay damages should the unfortunate regent's alter-ego cross into Rheulgard. [The count performs a diplomacy action on Rheulgard's behalf.]

As a result of this negotiation, I was able to strengthen my realm and broaden its influence by building roads for the movement of trade and troops to the interior. I also helped Berhagen and Rheulgard begin to resolve some of their own problems. By assisting my lieutenant in creating several trade routes and trade chains (which he accomplished handily), I gained a steady income from trade that I would otherwise have no claim upon. I made sure that Captain Reaversbane was adequately compensated for her support as well—some of the roads would go through her provinces—and everyone made out with a slow, steady flow of cash and support. Everyone, of course, except the Mountain Brigands of Berhagen, whose predations have been neatly curtailed. [Military units occupying a province can shut down holdings of any type—see "Conquest and Occupation" in the *BIRTHRIGHT* Rulebook].

## the roesonean distraction

*"Even if you value peace in your land, do not allow your foes to marshal against you. A wise regent takes steps to keep her foes off-balance at all times—and preferably at each others' throats."*

—Marlae Roesone, Baroness of Roesone

I pride myself on my honor, but I do not deceive myself into thinking personal honor and the honor of a regent are the same thing. A regent does what she must to keep her realm secure—to do less would be dishonorable and dangerous. As a result, a regent may resort to what seem like dishonorable or questionable actions in order to preserve the integrity of her realm.

Though Gavin Tael has never taken obvious offensive action against Roesone, I have known for years that the Baron of Ghoere intends to invade and conquer Roesone—when he feels he has achieved the requisite strength of arms and the political climate ripens. I am forever engaged in actions that delay this invasion, for a war with Ghoere would

at best leave both our realms devastated. At worst, he could sweep through Roesone to the sea, gaining a large portion of the empire he seeks.

Using the resources of my southern allies in Medoere and Ilien, I managed to instigate a plan to keep invasion a long way off—assuming Tael never finds out who orchestrated it.

I contacted my friends in Medoere and Ilien and asked for their aid *[diplomacy action]* First, I needed the services of a guildmaster—someone whose agents could pass unhindered into and out of Ghoere. At first, I proposed contacting el-Hadid or Siele Ghoried, but my friend Suris Enlien of Medoere advised against it—if I wanted intelligence in the realm of Ghoere, only one person could be relied on to provide it: Guilder Kalien of Endier.

Neither I nor Suris Enlien trust Guilder Kalien. Refined and subtle, he has a habit of making certain everyone in the region owes him a favor—and I worry about the day when he'll call his favors home. Still, Enlien has an uneasy alliance with Kalien, and contacted him on my behalf *[diplomacy action]*

I asked Kalien to use his guild holdings in Ghoere to spy on the armies marshalled there. If possible, I wanted to know who headed the forces stationed in the provinces bordering the Spiderfell. In return for this favor, I offered to use my influence with el-Hadid and Siele Ghoried to set up some lucrative trade routes between the three guildmasters.

Though Kalien assured me I needn't trouble myself, I insisted and he relented. I contacted the two traders and arranged for a trade route on Kalien's behalf *[trade route, built by Kalien but paid for by Roesone]* He, in the meantime, set his spies to work *[espionage action]*

Within a month, Kalien's agents provided me with a detailed description of the lieutenant Ghoere placed in charge of its eastern armies. I contacted Rogr Aglondier of Ilien *[diplomacy]* and told him the rest of my plan. Chuckling, he agreed to help.

Aglondier forged a ley line into the Ghoere province of Rhumannen *[forge ley line action]*. The following month, he cast a spell he calls “Rogr's Mighty Influence” *[subversion realm spell]* on the lieutenant Kalien had pinpointed for us.

Under magical influence, the lieutenant believed he had been ordered by Gavin Tael to attack the Spiderfell. The lieutenant led several units of cavalry and infantry into the Spi-

derfell *[move troops action]* and set about “cleaning” it for his overlord.

Naturally, when one attacks the Spiderfell, one can expect a single outcome: The lieutenant and many of his troops were destroyed; the rest fled back to Ghoere, disheartened and disturbed by their regent's apparent suicide order. Many deserted and fled to Endier and even Alamie. All told, Gavin Tael lost at least three units, possibly as many as five. To prevent discovery, Rogr Aglondier dissolved his ley line.

I then charged Guilder Kalien with one more commission *[diplomacy]* I asked him to have his guilders spy on Ghoere and find out what was happening there *[espionage action]* Keep in mind that I never told Guilder Kalien why I wanted any of this intelligence—I led him to believe I feared enemy action coming from the army commanded by the lieutenant. To the best of my knowledge, he still believes that.

According to Kalien's spies (who had to do little spying, I am told), Tael erupted into a mindless fury when he heard the news about the march on the Spiderfell. Some of his best troops were involved, and he will require a long time to replace them. Also, Kalien told me that Tael seemed even more infuriated than one might expect—perhaps I interrupted some plan of the baron's with my own.

As a result, Gavin Tael should spend the next year or so training and recruiting replacements for his troops—and watching the Spiderfell border. He doesn't know why his lieutenant attacked the awnshegh. According to rumor, he thinks the creature itself lured Ghoere's forces. This situation should keep the would-be emperor nervous and defensive for quite some time.

## a final word on domain actions

DMs and players alike should keep in mind that no domain action can replace creativity and good role-playing. The actions included here and in the BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook should be considered convenient tools for use by players and DMs alike—but they should not substitute for role-playing excitement. Anything that can be accomplished by a domain action, accompanied by the expenditure of resources and the rolling of a few dice, can also be accomplished (probably better and in a more cost-effective way) by an adventure. Domain actions should be regarded as shortcuts to aid role-playing, not replace it.

# strategies of empire

Any fool can inherit a kingdom. Only a competent ruler can bequeath one.

—Anuirean proverb

**R**egents of Cerilia take on great responsibilities when they assume the governance of provinces and holdings. Most focus on maintaining their realms and keeping problems from overwhelming them, while a few endeavor to expand their domains—either by improving their own holdings and influence, or at the expense of others.

## regal models

The following section discusses the strategies and tactics of several Cerilian regents. Some of them may be allies or enemies of player characters, while others may have preceded PC regents in their own realms. None of them fit completely into a “conservative/aggressive” dichotomy—successful regents find out quickly that they cannot allow themselves to fall into such a trap if they want to survive.

### gavin tael, baron of ghoere

9th-level Anuirean fighter

**S:** 18/25  
**D:** 14  
**C:** 16  
**I:** 12  
**W:** 13  
**Ch:** 11

**AL:** LE  
**AC:** -2  
**hp:** 73

**MV:** 6  
**THAC0:** 12 (10)  
**#AT:** 3/2  
**Dmg:** 2d4+2 (*Warstar*)

**Bloodline:** Reynir, major, 49.

**Blood Abilities:** Iron will, long life (major).

**Special Equipment:** *Warstar* (morning star +2, *Crown of Ghoere* (provides 25% magic resistance when worn), *field plate* +1, *shield* +1 (with raven symbol of Ghoere emblazoned on a red and green field).

**Proficiencies:** Battle Axe, Crossbow, Lance, Long Bow, Long Sword, Morning Star, Spear, Etiquette, Law, Leadership, Siegework, Strategy, Reading/Writing.

**Description/History:** The ruthless Baron of Ghoere (first mentioned in *Ruins of Empire*) took over the rulership of that realm a little over two decades ago and has turned it from a collection of provinces only loosely allied to an imperial interest, lacking little in strength and unity.

The baronets, knights, and other lords of Ghoran provinces once ruled their small lands and united only to keep their realms from breaking into smaller and weaker states. Even though Ghoere itself was formed out of two lesser kingdoms, the realm lay truly in chaos when Gavin Tael, a royal soldier and heir-apparent, assumed the throne.

No mysteries surround the iron-handed baron's coronation. The late regent died of natural causes, and no arguments over right of ascension ever occurred. Still, the new baron used his armies to bring the other lords of the land to heel.

Gavin Tael first formed the Iron Guard, a combination police force and army, before he assumed the throne. Knowing he was heir-apparent, Tael surrounded himself with trusted men and women who distinguished themselves in campaigns Tael himself led. He wanted only those few he could trust close to his banner. When the old baron died, these men and women made certain no opposition to Tael's ascension existed.

Early on in Tael's reign, however, a few of the barons did object to his heavy-handed approach to rulership. They suggested the Baron of Ghoere set up an advisory panel—a council of lords—to oversee his political decisions and ratify them or reject them according to majority vote.

The Iron  
Guard

surprised the nobles in their beds, dragging them from their castles, and whipping them soundly in the public square. The baron had heard that such a tactic might prove an interesting divergence from civil diplomacy; apparently, the nobles agreed, as no mention of an “advisory council” was ever heard again.

Now, the baron rules Ghoere with a literal iron fist. All his elite units and cavalry must spend time serving in his Iron Guard, and those who distinguish themselves gain honors and promotions. The baron rewards commoners and nobles alike—and the punishments he deals out overcome all class prejudice.

## the governance of ghoere

Strength and power fulfill the baron’s needs. He does not want to shepherd his realm along, building a nation for a son, daughter, or other heir to inherit. He wants to take over the world (or as much of it as possible) *now*, so that he can enjoy it.

But Gavin Tael knows patience. He learned many things from his initial years in power. His ascension succeeded so smoothly because he trusted minions and lieutenants to carry out his wishes—his foes did not have protectors of the same stature, or armies to defend them, and so he won their first round of “negotiations.”

The realm of Ghoere always fell short of conquest—or even true unity—because it never had a strong head supported by a network of strong lieutenants. Gavin Tael moved to correct that lack. He sees himself as the strongest ruler in Anuire—an obvious choice for emperor, should the occasion arise—and he encourages his lieutenants and vassals to serve him faithfully and gain reward.

Gavin Tael uses survival and fear as motivators. Cross him, and you won’t survive. Serve him well, and you have nothing to fear. He uses the law of his land to protect those who do not oppose him—and to motivate people who may wish to stand aside.

Gavin Tael’s strategies can be summarized as follows:

**Be patient—put yourself in the right position, and then wait.**

While Tael may be evil, he knows how to follow the rules when he must. If

Tael had taken the throne of Ghoere prema-

turely, he would have set himself up as an obvious usurper and despot, provoking and unifying his minor nobles and causing a popular revolt. In the years since his ascension, Tael hasn’t so much conquered or destroyed his rivals as he has intimidated them. Roesone, to the south, and Mhoried, to the north, could be threats to his dreams of conquest, but by not provoking them until he is ready, he makes them play the game on his field instead of theirs.

**Direct action speaks louder than words.** By quickly chastising the nobles who proposed the council of advisers, Tael opened himself up to some trouble, but mostly impressed the commonfolk more than he disturbed them. If the baron had decided to go up against the dissident nobles militarily, he might have won an absolute victory, but he would have decimated part of his realm, lost practiced lieutenants (some of whom, granted, have had to be disposed of since), and killed off a large number of peasants on either side. As a result, the peasantry got to look on while the nobles suffered the punishment they deserved—instead of paying for the nobles’ pride with the peasants’ lives.

**You have to trust someone.** Many a strong-willed leader has been brought down by mistrust and betrayal. Distrust breeds disloyalty. If you reward and encourage subordinates, they tend to perform better and are less likely to betray you—especially if you punish betrayal personally and harshly, but reward loyalty with equal fervor. A leader who cannot trust his subordinates is no leader at all.

**Control your own kingdom before you try to control another.** While Gavin Tael does not control all the law within the provinces he rules (he hasn’t even managed to push out all outside rulership), he works toward this end. The Baron of Ghoere likely won’t invade anyone until he feels certain that the land under his feet won’t shift beneath him. But once he’s sure, the regents of the Heartlands should watch out.

**If it looks too good to be true, it probably is.**

Early on in his reign, Gavin Tael studied a map of Anuire and saw how his kingdom compared to those around him. He glared hungrily at Endier, thinking that the rich, tiny one-province realm would make a nice southern province for his burgeoning empire. But he hesitated for good reason. If Gavin Tael had invaded Endier early on in his reign, the move might have proven as disastrous as starting a civil war in his own kingdom. An invasion of Endier would provide the neighboring realms with the motivation they needed to ally against Ghoere and reduce his kingdom to anarchic provinces again. By waiting and strengthening

his position, he's watched Medoere and Diemed square off, and he finds it amusing that Boeruine and Avanil cannot settle their squabbles. Only Mhoried perceives him as the threat he truly is, and he needs to deal with the Mhor somehow before things get out of hand.

## learning from the iron baron's mistakes

No one is perfect, and the Baron of Ghoere proves himself no exception. He has made mistakes, and they make good lessons for beginning regents.

**Direct action provides a loud lesson.** When Gavin Tael dealt directly with his nobles, he may have spared and pleased the peasantry, but he alerted his own remaining nobles and his neighbors. The baron declared through that action his choice not to work within conventional rules of diplomacy. He would be obeyed, or else. Nobles proved slow to offer him true allegiance after that, and seeking vassals from other countries became more difficult.

**A show of strength provokes a show of its own.** Before the barony of Ghoere became an expansionistic, unified power, the Mhor, the Baron of Roesone, and most of the other regents in the area seemed content to rule their own realms and ignore their neighbors. Wars occurred and territory exchanged hands, but never on more than a provincial basis. Gavin Tael, however, reminded everyone in the area that the Iron Throne still sits empty, and someone may soon make a play for the empire.

**Brutality may be efficient, but it costs as well.** The most noble and respected aristocrats of the land had to be put to death or driven out by the Iron Guard after Gavin Tael's nature became apparent. Not all would bend knee to a tyrant, no matter how lawful or orderly his nature. Evil cannot forever placate good, and only attracts evil in the end. The baron might learn that his "loyal" subordinates are actually biding their time until he makes a critical mistake.

## future plans for ghoere

While Gavin Tael may change his plans according to the actions of the realms around him, he continues to keep going as he has been up to this point. Slowly, he will build up all his law holdings and provinces to near their maximum levels, he'll intimidate the other regents of domains within his provinces into following his lead (or, in the case of the powerful Sword Mage, he will negoti-

ate), and then he will make his army the most powerful in Anuire. Then, and only then, he will systematically conquer or otherwise control every realm within reach of his own kingdom, forging a new empire out of the fragmented ruins of the old.

## king uldviik of hjolvar

6th-level Rjurik fighter

**S:** 15  
**D:** 12  
**C:** 16  
**I:** 14  
**W:** 15  
**Ch:** 12

**AL:** LN  
**AC:** 3  
**hp:** 46  
**MV:** 9

**THAC0:** 15 (14)

**#AT:** 1

**Dmg:** 2d4+1 (broad sword +)

**Bloodline:** Reynir, major, 22.

**Blood Abilities:** Forest walk (minor), resistance (major).

**Special Equipment:** Broad sword +1, half plate mail +1, long bow, 12 arrows +1, +3 against orogs

**Proficiencies:** Broad Sword, Claymore, Dagger, Harpoon, Long Bow, Sling, Fishing, Hunting, Languages (Brecht), Law, Leadership, Reading/Writing, Set Snares, Survival.

**Description/History:** King Uldviik (first mentioned in *The Rjurik Highlands*) followed his father, Lord Varrig, from the relative safety of the more civilized Rjurik kingdoms to the tiny northern port of Kopingdal. They brought with them a few loyal warriors and settlers, and Lord Varrig built the tiny settlement into a city—and the surrounding provinces into a realm.

Lord Varrig's primary concern soon became the Urga-Zai goblins. He managed to close the Hjolvar Pass and the mountains to the west shielded his slowly-growing realm from their incursions.

King

Uldviik took over rulership of Hjolvar and the building of Kopingdal when his father died some years ago. Uldviik keeps the small realm secure against the goblins and orogs of Urga-Zai and has established trade and friendship with most of his nearest neighbors. Remarkably, he somehow manages to be on good terms with realms that have strong enmity for each other. The Count of Danigau admires Uldviik's determination even though the king trades with the pirates of Danigau and has relations with the Vos of Rzhlev.

Perhaps King Uldviik projects an inherent nobility in his struggle against nature and his enemies. Where other nobles would have to choose sides to gain allies, Uldviik gains respect from all sides and has not been forced to ally against any of his chosen friends.

Uldviik rules his family this way as well. He has three strong-willed children. When Reyna, his favorite, chose to become a druid of Erik—thereby putting aside any chance of becoming the ruling Queen of Hjolvar after Uldviik's death—Uldviik encouraged her and still trusted her to perform her duties as his daughter, though she could take her final vows at any time. As a result, Erik's priesthood looks kindly on the king, and he gains the support of a grateful daughter and an approving populace.

But Uldviik, old and wise as he is, does have some flaws. The other Rjurik kingdoms in the area seem to think that ego motivated his father to carve out a realm of his own—and they might be right. They scarcely acknowledge Hjolvar as a legitimate kingdom, and treat it as a tiny, detached settlement. As a result, Uldviik cannot count on their aid if ever the Urga-Zai goblins attempt to invade.

## nurturing a growing kingdom

The King of Hjolvar wants his realm to grow and stand against the anarchy he sees plaguing the northern states of Rjurik. He desires nothing more than the building and strengthening of Hjolvar, and has a single-minded determination toward this end. Uldviik's strategies can be seen as follows:

**Build rather than conquer .**  
Lord Varrig instilled this philosophy in his son at an early age. Rather than use his

influence and popularity to take over an established kingdom, Lord Varrig chose to build his own. He took those who would follow him to an area considered uninhabitable by most Rjurik and began the forging of a realm. Uldviik has stayed on this course. When he sees the advantages possessed by his neighbors, he does not set out to steal these advantages or conquer his neighbors—he learns from them and builds up his own strength.

**Do not overstep yourself.** If King Uldviik desired, he could probably rule up the province and holding levels of his kingdom by depleting his resources. He could spend all his power on recruiting new peoples and offering incentives to immigrants. The king might enjoy some success—but it would leave him with little strength to defend himself against his enemies. So instead he hoards his support and his power (Regency Points) and builds what he can, when he can.

**Encourage those loyal to you, even if they don't do what you want.** By "allowing" his daughter and heir-apparent to give up her claim on the throne to join the priesthood of Erik, Uldviik gained more than he lost. Had he pressed, he might have convinced Reyna to turn away from the priestly life and assume her "rightful" place as his first lieutenant. But he might have failed, might have driven her away. In any event Uldviik probably would not enjoy the goodwill of the powerful Emerald Spiral temple, as he does now. And as a side benefit, Uldviik's remaining two sons have seen that he won't pressure them to do anything they don't want to do—and have become all the more loyal.

**Don't discourage heroes: Make them.** Many regents might become jealous when one of their lieutenants outshines them in any way. Elka Thajuula, Uldviik's primary lieutenant and a clever ranger, has made herself so popular among the people of Hjolvar (and so hated among the goblins of Urga-Zai) that the king of Urga-Zai has offered 5,000 gold pieces for her head. The people of Kopingdal take her every visit as a cue for celebration, and she takes most of the credit for keeping the goblins from over-running the Hjolvar Pass. Instead of reassigning her to other, less obvious duties, or trying to claim more of the credit for himself, King Uldviik honors her greatly and publically acclaims her a hero of the realm. As a result, his subjects aspire to serve Hjolvar valiantly (to gain like recognition and reward), and they all talk about how good a leader the king must be to inspire such a faithful and valiant lieutenant.

**Friends can be more valuable than allies.**  
Though King Uldviik has no formal alliances with

any Rjurik, Brecht, or Vos states, he has won the respect of most realms with which he has contact. Even the southwestern Rjurik, who don't consider Hjolvar a "real" realm, respect his determination and the loyalty he gains from his people. The king seems satisfied with respect and friendship—for now. He believes that until he can offer some service (or potential for service) to another realm, he shouldn't enter into a formal alliance with one. He does not want to risk owing a more powerful realm anything he would hesitate to pay back.

## the error of uldviik's ways

King Uldviik may be known for his determination and the loyalty he inspires in his subjects, but rumors of mistakes and errors in judgment circulate in his realm, as in any other. The king could learn a great deal from his own mistakes:

**No realm can truly stand alone.** As proud as the King of Hjolvar is of his people, he cannot, or should not, truly believe they can stand against an outright invasion of Urga-Zai goblins—and such an invasion could occur at any time. Without true allies and support (especially from his nearest neighbors), the king cannot hope to resist a full offensive. He must swallow his pride and negotiate some sort of alliance with another Rjurik kingdom, or perhaps Danigau.

**Conservative building could result in stagnation.** Lord Varrig might be proud of Hjolvar if he could see it today, but he would be concerned as well. Though both the lord and the king have made tremendous progress in carving out a realm in the midst of nowhere, much more needs to be done. Again, if Uldviik swallowed his pride and asked for help, he might be able to gain support from his friends and build a little faster. At the very least, he should build up the provinces around Hjolvar pass and fortify his holdings there.

**Don't provide anything for nothing.** Gratitude can be a cloak that wears thin and begins to smell over time. The king does what he thinks is right for his kingdom and his family, but doesn't always exploit his every resource. When Reyna asked to be released from her commitment to regency, and Uldviik granted the request, both Reyna and the Emerald Spire were pleased and grateful. They expected to pay the king a handsome "dowry" for the royal daughter, but he made them pay nothing. While Uldviik won their gratitude and respect, he could have had more at no cost to their continuing friendship and loyalty. At the same time, Uldviik should recognize that he keeps the Urga-Zai goblins distracted from

another of their hated enemies, the Count of Danigau. The count is grateful, but the king could ask him to help support their joint effort to contain the evil of Urga-Zai. Even though King Uldviik would defend the mountain pass anyway, it wouldn't hurt to get paid for the effort.

## the future of hjolvar

Uldviik knows he cannot live forever, and, even now, he prepares to pass his kingship on to someone. The loyalty of his children cannot be questioned, but he wanted his daughter Reyna to rule after him. Now, he must make up time if he wants to groom one of her brothers for kingship.

Meanwhile, he also wants to leave a strong realm behind in his passing. Lately, his mind strays west, over the mountains and into Urga-Zai. The King of Hjolvar would give a lot to know what Urga-Zai is planning. If he could time a coastal attack to coincide with a sortie from Danigau, he might cripple the goblins and keep them off his successor's back for the first few years of his reign.

## richard talbehr

*Count of Müden  
4th-level Brecht fighter*

**S:** 15

**D:** 16

**C:** 10

**I:** 15

**W:** 15

**Ch:** 16

**AL:** LG

**AC:** 4

**hp:** 30

**MV:** 12

**THAC0:** 17 (14)

**#AT:** 1

**Dmg:** 1d6+4 (rapier +3)

**Bloodline:** Brenna, major, 30.

**Blood Abilities:** Detect lie, home hearkening (major).

**Special Equipment:** Rapier +3, leather armor +1 living tapestry (see the "Magical Items and Artifacts" section of this book).

**Proficiencies:** Lance, Main-Gauche, Rapier, Administration, Diplomacy, Etiquette, Languages (Anuirean, Khinasi), Leadership, Reading/Writing (Anuirean, Brecht).

**Description/History:** Richard Talbehr rules the land-bound provinces of the great Brecht state of Müden. His family is old and his bloodline strong, and Richard has had a relatively easy time as Count of Müden. When a popular captain of the Royal Navy, Melisande Reaversbane, distinguished herself as more than just a warrior, he made her an ally in charge of not only his navy, but several provinces within his kingdom. Now, the two work as allies and co-rulers of Müden.

Richard Talbehr grew up knowing he would inherit the lordship of Müden, one of the most prosperous realms surrounding the Great Bay. His parents and tutors trained him in diplomacy and leadership, and he took an interest in economy and political tactics. Generally a relaxed ruler, the Count of Müden delegates his authority to many subordinates, not the least of whom is his primary lieutenant and vassal, Theofold the guildmaster.

If the count has any real weakness, it is his lack of ambition. With a vibrant ally like Melisande Reaversbane, a trained army and a legendary navy, and the resources of a powerful domain all at his command, he could probably dominate the Basin States and much of the rest of Brechtür. But Talbehr has developed a “live and let live” attitude toward rulership—and it has kept his realm free from war during his entire tenure.

## the conservative course of the count

While Richard Talbehr cannot be called lazy or unininvolved with the politics of the world, he does seem unambitious. He also seems, to some extent, to ignore the development of his own provinces. Though his family has ruled Müden for generations, room for improvement of province and holding levels still exists. Yet he has not pursued their development as fervently as many nobles and commoners might wish.

The Count of Müden’s basic governing strategies can be summarized as follows:

**Develop a reputation for consistency and strength.** Virtually everyone in

around Müden knows how the count will react to any inside or outside stimulus. He has declared his intention to send Melisande Reaversbane after any pirates preying on ships voyaging to or from Müden or any of that realm’s allies, and he will react forcibly against any aggression toward his realm or the domains of his allies. He leaves the training and dispersion of his armies and fleets in the hands of those who know how to use them, and he gives them support in training and upkeep. As a result, Müden has one of the most respected (and feared) navies in the region. No one, not even the Swordhawk of Massenmarch, wants to risk awakening the sleeping giant of Müden’s military—but everyone in the region knows to tread lightly around his realm.

**Respect goes further than fear.** Fear of an internal or external threat might bring a populace or a hostile realm into line—for a time—but respect makes friends and allies. Richard Talbehr has proven an able politician and negotiator. While the Swordhawk and the pirates of Grabentod have consistently proven themselves his enemies, others in the region have responded favorably to his tactics. Should missteps in negotiation occur, Talbehr has a knack for making sure face is saved all the way around. If rulers of other countries feared Talbehr personally, he would not have the influence he does over other kingdoms: Few states of Brechtür will casually refuse a “request” of the diplomatic count—whereas they might fight back against a demand by a ruler they feared.

**Develop allies in the strangest places.** Somehow, the Count of Müden has made friends with Justina Heulough (also known as the Banshegh) and the dwarves of Baruk-Azhik. Both have, on occasion, aided him in minor ways (the dwarves, long known for their isolationism, actually sent a contingent of mercenaries to Müden), and everyone in the region knows Talbehr has made friends with these strangers.

**Make sure everyone wins.** In a war, there should be only one winner—according to most popular wisdom. Unfortunately, many Cerilian regents consider all negotiation as a war of some kind. The Count of Müden does not. He believes that for a negotiation to work, everyone should come away from the table with something. On occasion, he has used his influence (most often with the guildmaster Theofold) to provide less-equipped negotiators with levers they can use against those who would take advantage of them.

The count’s profit is the respect and gratitude of others. While gratitude will, in the political arena, seldom be rewarded, respect goes a long way. Few diplomats enter into negotiations with

the Count of Müden (or his allies) with the intent of besting him. Instead, most take on his attitude and try to make a good deal for all around.

## the mistakes of müden

Even the ablest ruler makes mistakes sometimes, and the count does have a few actions on his record that point to errors in judgment or execution. A few of these mistakes may, of course, be judgment calls, but many rulers would agree Richard Talbehr's rule is far from perfect.

**Giving up power seldom wins you anything.** While allies and vassals should be valued by all rulers, actually giving up part of your kingdom to someone, just because he or she may be more able to rule that portion, generally isn't wise. Melisande Reaversbane certainly earned her position in many ways—a competent warrior, an able and aggressive sea captain, and a surprisingly wise leader, she has made Müden's coastal provinces the success they are today. However, the count could have made her a lieutenant or even a vassal, rather than a full ally, and gained the same effect. By giving up part of his realm, he admits to the world that he has weaknesses in rulership he does not intend to correct. He limits himself by not growing or delegating, but apparently giving up.

**Non-growth appears to be stagnation.** While no one would want the Count of Müden to emulate the imperial designs of the Gorgon or the Swordhawk, many nobles and even a few members of the realm's burgeoning middle class wonder why Richard Talbehr has not begun expanding his realm or increasing his holdings at a faster rate.

Talbehr himself often wonders this as well. He has not ruled up his provinces as quickly as he might mainly because he likes having a somewhat underdeveloped realm. While the two cities of Müden sparkle as gems in his crown, the pastoral regions of the country shimmer with the summer of Brechtür's prosperity.

Still, the Count has had more than a few opportunities to expand. If he does not want to violate his neighbor's realms (though Treucht, Berhagen, and Rheulgard all were once Müden colonies or protectorates), he could take over Grabentod and no one would fault him. The pirates of the northern realm have provoked his navies repeatedly, and as a result, his navy has imprisoned their king. Many people believe Müden would be doing Grabentod a favor if the count gave the word to take it over.

**An iron fist can crush a velvet glove.** While the count's win-win negotiating tactics do pay off more often than not, Talbehr seems to ignore the fact that many of those he negotiates with have disguised future goals. Too often, he agrees to treaties or plans that benefit him not in the least, but set up others to make grand, sweeping moves on the chessboard of politics. While these decisions seldom come back to haunt him directly, it is only a matter of time before someone out-maneuvers the political genius.

## the future of müden

If Richard Talbehr has his way, everything will continue as before. He hopes to placate Rheulgard (its leaders and people were upset at his nominal alliance with Justina) and help Theofold increase inland trade. As far as his military might goes, he wants Melisande Reaversbane to make the Great Bay safe for all shipping and travel while still a free-trading area for all. Ideally, he would like to see the Swordhawk in Massenmarch focus on some other target for his aggressions (perhaps Kiergard, since it's controlled by the Gorgon anyway), but he will remain watchful.

## king alnor

*Regent of Jankaping,  
6th-level Rjurik fighter*

S: 16  
D: 10  
C: 10  
I: 11  
W: 9  
Ch: 14

AL: N  
AC: 4  
hp: 41  
MV: 9  
THAC0: 15  
#AT: 1  
Dmg: 2d4+1 (claymore +1)

**Bloodline:** Basaiä, major, 22

**Blood Abilities:** Animal affinity (major).

**Special Equipment:**

*Claymore +1, boots of varied tracks*  
improved mail.

**Proficiencies:** Claymore, Dagger, Hand Axe, Harpoon, Long Bow, Pike, Animal Handling, Animal Lore, Animal Training, Direction Sense, Hunting, Reading/Writing, Riding (land-based).

**Description/History:** Alnor grew up in and around the city of Stornomark in Karlskaang. He never desired rulership of Jankaping or its law holdings, though he might not have minded a small jarldom around the city. Alnor grew up as one of the “urban Rjurik,” preferring life in the small capital city to the nomadic life his father and brothers led.

But fate does not respect a young man’s wishes. Alnor grew to manhood in his aunt’s city home, venturing outside the city walls only to hunt and fish. His father and older brothers roamed the provinces of Jankaping, overseeing the law of the land, until they died in a summer squall off the northern coast. Quite abruptly, Alnor found himself king over the entire realm.

Almost from the start, King Alnor made his subjects uneasy. While he enjoyed hunting and fishing—and excelled at these activities—he won no respect with his deeds. King Alnor saw hunting and fishing as sports, not day-to-day means of survival. He discouraged clan migrations, wondering aloud why the nomads of his realm didn’t simply settle in the southern provinces, leaving the icy northern lands to the glaciers and the sea lions.

Two dissaffected jarls, Bjark of Aaldvaar and Olam of Aaldnjor, rejected their new regent’s authority in those lands and assumed control of the law and province rulership in their provinces. They managed to convince several dozen families and a few entire clans to defect to their rulership, and King Alnor reacted by calling for a great feast in Stornomark. Most of the loyal jarls and clan leaders attended, and he surprised them by wishing both renegade jarls well, jesting that he’d see their followers in and around the city come winter.

King Alnor seems blind to the friction between the various Rjurik factions present in his realm. He looks on many of his own people—even his own advisers and lieutenants—as backward yokels who cannot learn from history or from the successes of other realms. If he must rule Jankaping, Alnor has decided, he will drag its people into the sixteenth century or die trying.

## the progress of the king

Despite the obvious blunders King Alnor has committed since his ascension to realm rulership, he does have a basic plan for controlling his holdings and provinces.

The King of Jankaping’s basic strategies for governance can be summarized as follows:

**Lead from the front.** King Alnor truly practices what he preaches. He lives in the only city in Jankaping and spends most of his time there. He encourages others of his people to form permanent settlements in the southern provinces, and wants them to go north only in the summer on fishing and hunting trips.

**Rewards are more effective than punishments.** Even though two prominent jarls have essentially rebelled against King Alnor’s rules and his wishes, he hasn’t sent his army after them or tried to break the people to his will. He declared, early on, that he had little interest in the northern provinces, and when some of his subjects expressed a preference for their nomadic lifestyle, he did not force them back into the fold.

**Confidence is key.** While King Alnor may not be popular with all of his people, he does not back away from a challenge. Essentially, by rebelling against his new ideas and new way of doing things, the jarls of Aaldvaar and Aaldnjor have said they can provide a better life for their people. King Alnor wants to see them put their tradition where their mouths are—he thinks the Rjurik people are ready to move into permanent settlements and that his side will win the war of comfort and stability.

## weakness of the king

While true kingship may not be a popularity contest, few regents of Cerilia have achieved such a lofty goal. The people of Jankaping, Rjuriks all, tend to take a “show me” attitude toward their young king. If he does not win their trust and respect, his rule won’t last long. The mistakes King Alnor has made might come back to him in no uncertain ways.

**No one should be allowed to flaunt the power of the true king.** Even if King Alnor believes his ways can triumph over the old ways of the Rjurik, he can’t allow open rebellion to exist within his kingdom if he wants to rule. While a few enlightened subjects might see his unwillingness to attack the rebel jarls and their followers, the masses believe he is a weak king with no real motivation to lead—and they aren’t far wrong.

**If you lead from the front, you may leave someone behind.** Kings of Cerilia, as well as

other rulers, tend to be conservative. They might introduce change or invite progress, but they seldom advocate it as strongly as King Alnor has. Essentially, the young regent of Jankaping has said to his people, “this is my policy; love it or lump it.” Too many of his own jarls and the commoners they represent do not love it and the regent may take a few lumps of his own. They feel Alnor isn’t remaining true to the traditions of the Rjurik people and that he can’t be trusted with the rulership of the kingdom.

**Advisers are not just drains on the treasury.** King Alnor practically ignores the advice of his lieutenants and advisers. He chose a lonely path to walk and doesn’t want to hear dissent from his own staff. That’s fine—but if a king doesn’t like the advice he’s getting, he should replace his advisers. Having popular, powerful, political foes in his own cabinet does the king no good at all. If King Alnor learns to listen to those who offer dissenting advice, they might prove to be allies. Otherwise, like Sir Thorgrim, Alnor’s cousin, they’ll grow discontented and desire power for themselves.

**Don’t disparage tradition—it got you there.** Kings and other regents shouldn’t ignore how they got to be rulers of their realms. King Alnor became regent of Jankaping through inheritance—a tradition not held in all realms. If the king wants to dispose of some traditions, regardless of the desires of his people, he might put into question all traditions, including respect and devotion to one’s king.

## the future of jankaping

King Alnor doesn’t want Jankaping to continue on its current course of development. He sees the threats posed to the northlands by the White Witch and the Blood Skull Barony (not to mention some of the evil rulers in other Rjurik realms). He wants to establish a defensible, solid, and progressive kingdom. The time for nomadic tribes on Cerilia is over. Jankaping’s populace should plant firm roots and build walls to weather the storm that will soon ravage the northlands.

## beysim ibn faroud el-duatim

*Emir of Sendoure,  
7th-level Khinasi wizard*

**S:** 8  
**D:** 12  
**C:** 10  
**I:** 17

**W:** 14  
**Ch:** 13

**AL:** NE

**AC:** 8

**hp:** 20

**MV:** 12

**THAC0:** 18

**#AT:** 1

**Dmg:** 1d4+1 (dagger +1)

**Bloodline:** Brenna, minor, 19.

**Blood Abilities:** Enhanced sense (minor).

**Special Equipment:** Dagger +1, cloak of protection +2, scarab of protection, ring of neutralize poison (1/day), spellbook.

**Proficiencies:** Dagger, Administration, Ancient History, Astrology, Languages (Anuirean, Brecht, Ancient Masetian), Reading/Writing (Anuirean, Ancient Masetian, Khinasi), Riding (land-based), Spellcraft.

**Spells commonly memorized** (4/3/2/1): 1st—*Khinasi trade tongue* (BoM), *read magic*, *sleep*, *subversion*\*; 2nd—*coffer credit*\* (BoM), *invisibility*, *locate object* 3rd—*demagogue*\* (BoM), *protection from normal missiles* 4th—*improved armor* (BoM).

\*Realm spell; BoM=Spell found in the *Book of Magecraft*

**Description/History:** The emir Beysim ibn Faroud el-Duatim, Absolute Monarch of the Northern Marches, became “absolute monarch” when his brother perished on a hunting trip. The new emir assumed the throne of Sendoure amid a wake of controversy, and even now many nobles thinly veil their displeasure at el-Duatim’s position. Only his power as a wizard and his allies in the Ghoudaiï Coster keep him secure in his rule.

Living in a realm once famous for its trader- and bandit-kings, the emir has created an exalted position for himself. Perhaps he created all his titles and honorifics (he has over 70 of them) to increase his claim to the legitimate rule of Sendoure, but most people believe he’s just got an imperial-sized ego.

Sendoure benefits from its location and its terrain. Lying in the only decent land route between the Khinasi states and Anuire, Sendoure also trades with the agrarian and peaceful

halflings of the Burrows and the Brechts of Rohrmarch and Rheulgard. Beysim el-Duatim makes sure that all wealth passing through his realm touches his hands as well.

But the emir owes much to the avaricious head of the Ghoudaiä Coster, the Brecht Helmut Gruber. Helmut, a self-made crime lord, resents the fact that he needs the egotistical emir at all, and takes pains to remind el-Duatim that the Khinasi regent needs the Brecht guildmaster more than ever.

## the legitimate concerns of el-duatim

After establishing his right to rule Sendoure (a long and arduous process), the emir felt he deserved a break. Unfortunately, his disgruntled nobles and his aggressive neighbors haven't let the pressure ease on the Khinasi regent and he hasn't been able to enjoy his rule as much as he'd hoped. Still, the emir of Sendoure doesn't let weighty concerns get in the way of his plans:

**Use the traditions and laws of the land to your advantage.** Even though regents make their own rules, an emir ignores tradition at his peril. The emir el-Duatim used the traditions of the Khinasi realm to his advantage. When his brother died, he appeared to be the only logical heir and he seized the throne despite the objections of the nobles. He revived the old titles and honorifics attached to his family name (some referring to lands and offices not part of Sendoure for centuries) to bury his detractors in legal precedent and confusion. The commonfolk of Sendoure, seeing the overwhelming "evidence," sided mostly with el-Duatim and he became the ruler of the realm before anyone could recover and mount a counter-argument. Now, when the emir wants to do anything to increase his hold on the realm, he instructs his advisers to search through ancient scrolls and texts to find historical precedence to back him up.

The other nobles, whose lines come from the selfsame precedence, dare not oppose him.

**Use both sides of the law.** For a regent to be effective, sometimes he has to put himself above the law while appearing to conform to its rules entirely. The emir recruited Helmut and his thieves' guild before he took over

Sendoure's rulership and used the Ghoudaiä Coster to eliminate or blackmail his most potent rivals. Since Helmut does all the dirty work, no direct blame can be placed on the regent.

**Anticipate your enemies' strategies.** In Khinasi, where daggers in the dark and poisons in the wine can be used in place of diplomacy, a regent has to stay three steps ahead of his rivals. The emir depends on the Coster's spies and assassins to keep his enemies off-balance. Since the nobles who oppose el-Duatim have no such resources, they cannot anticipate the regent's own actions.

**Location, location, location.** While el-Duatim had no control over where he ruled, he could not have chosen better. He continues to exploit Sendoure's position between three Cerilian regions, keeping it a thriving trading metropolis. If the emir desired to make Sendoure a military power, or a center for diplomacy and intrigue, he could be torn apart by his neighbors. However, as a trading center, Sendoure proves itself much more valuable to its neighbors than it would be if conquered or destroyed.

## the over-reaching royal ego

The emir of Sendoure hasn't made himself popular with his nobles or his people. Even his ally in the Coster isn't satisfied with his actions. Most observers believe the emir thinks of himself as the "Absolute Monarch of the Northern Marches" first, and someone with a responsibility to his subjects second. Here are some of his mistakes:

**Confidence is good, ego is bad.** When the emir set himself up to resist claims against his throne, he did so by cloaking himself in every title and precedent he could think of—and it worked. His enemies could not refute all his claims (most of which were entirely legitimate, if outdated), but when they conceded publicly, he continued to rub their noses in his royalty. Now, he seems increasingly alone at the top of a realm once known for its egalitarian capitalism. More and more, el-Duatim cites "divine right" as precedent for his decrees and decisions, and his people grow tired of their monarch.

**Opulence is good, decadence is bad.** Again, the emir oversteps himself. Sendoure has always been a relatively rich country, and its nobility lives well. However, in an effort to out-do his nobles and his predecessors, el-Duatim spends every spare gold piece on improving his court and making himself look rich and powerful. The people want to feel proud of their wealthy regent and visitors want to be entertained in an opulent

court, but when the emir throws away more riches in an hour than a hundred commoners will see in a year, he invites scorn and envy.

**Keep your friends close, your enemies closer, and your allies on a leash.** The emir has few friends and his enemies are, for the most part, known to him—but his powerful ally, Helmut Gruber of the Ghoudaiä Coster, needs to be defused. Helmut secretly despises the emir and wants to make sure el-Duatim knows he needs Helmut more than Helmut needs him. Recently, he has gone so far as to set up law holdings in the region, and he uses extortion and threats to bend the emir to his will. No longer does Helmut pose as the faithful lackey—he has become a rival, and since he was once the emir's most powerful ally, he knows el-Duatim cannot stand against him for long.

**Your neighbors can see you.** The Hydra and the Sphinx see how prosperous Sendoure has become. They want a cut of the action—or they might cut el-Duatim out entirely. The Sphinx has already snipped off much of Sendoure's southern trade, and the Hydra has practically taken over two of Sendoure's eastern provinces. All this happened while el-Duatim arrayed himself in the

trappings of nobility and tradition—and fed his ego on sweetmeats and flattery. Even now, the emir's nephew, the bastard son of el-Duatim's brother, lurks in the shadows, awaiting the chance to overthrow the emir. If the Sphinx or the Hydra, or any of the emir's other enemies, learn of him, they might back the young man just to put Sendoure into chaos.

## dark days ahead for the shining kingdom

Sendoure could recover from its troubles. The emir still has popular support with the people, and if he realizes what's going on in his own kingdom, he could throw Helmut and the powerful Coster out using his army and some of the less-disatisfied nobles. Should he take action against the Coster (a known band of bandits and assassins), he might even gain the support of his nephew—at least temporarily.

Unfortunately, el-Duatim appears drunk on power and convinced of his own right to rule. He doesn't understand that, on Cerilia, he who has the might often finds a way to gain the right.

# able assistance

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*"Lieutenants, advisers, counselors, and peers make a regent strong and wise... sometimes despite his own best efforts."*

—Anonymous

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**T**hrough domain actions or over the course of adventuring and role-playing, a regent may attract lieutenants to help run his domain. He might also gather advisers and skilled persons about him, if he is wise, so that he can learn from them and use their knowledge to benefit his holding. A regent who tries to do everything himself finds he cannot dance to several different tunes at once—and falls flat on his face trying.

This section presents several forms of able assistance for the regent. Three types of NPCs fit into this category—the *lieutenant*, the *adviser*, and the *henchman*. Each has his own abilities, and each can add depth to a BIRTHRIGHT campaign.

The individual NPCs presented here are offered as examples of the many types of assistants a regent might want to include on his staff. Any part of an NPC's description—such as experience level, alignment, or other characteristics—can be changed to suit DM, player, or PC needs.

## lieutenants

Generally considered the highest-ranking of assistants, the lieutenant must be a trusted individual, probably one known by the PC regent for some time. A regent does not just go out and hire a lieutenant—lieutenants must be developed through years of loyal

service and dedication.

A lieutenant must earn this much trust because oftentimes he might rule a domain in his regent's stead. Lieutenants can perform domain actions on behalf of their regents—or on their own behalf, if their regents haven't instructed or watched them closely enough.

When a PC makes someone his lieutenant (usually using the lieutenant domain action), he creates a stand-in for himself. Should a PC regent go adventuring for an extended period of time or other circumstances dictate his absence, he likely will leave a lieutenant behind to administer affairs of state.

While the player usually determines the lieutenant's activities during a domain turn (hence gaining an extra action every three months), the DM may have the lieutenant act on his own if he feels the behavior enhances the campaign storyline.

One can think of the lieutenant as something of a super-henchman. With more power and more individuality than most NPCs, he can affect a PC regent's life dramatically and almost instantaneously. A betrayal or mistake made by a lieutenant can have drastic consequences for the PC regent, his allies, and his domain.

The following descriptions detail "typical" lieutenants. Some of these NPCs already devote their talents to specific realms, while others could appear anywhere in Cerilia.

### theofold

*Guildmaster of Müden's Seelundkaufen,  
9th-level halfling thief*

S: 9  
D: 18  
C: 15  
I: 15  
W: 9  
Ch: 11

AL: LN  
AC: 2  
hp: 42  
MV: 9  
THAC0: 16  
#AT: 1  
Dmg: 1d6+3 (*Stuhlschek*)

**Bloodline:** Masela, minor, 18.

**Blood Abilities:** Direction sense.

**Special Equipment:** *Stuhlschek* ("Steelspine," a rapier +2, main-gauche +1, leather armor, ring of protection +1.

**Proficiencies:** Dagger, Main-Gauche, Rapier, Sling, Administration, Blind-fighting, Intrigue, Reading Lips.

**Description/History:** Theofold learned his trade on the wharfs of Brechlen, pretending to be a down-and-out halfling trader from the Burrows trying to earn enough money to get home. He specialized in scams meant to defraud wealthy fools, rather than burglary or outright theft. He accidentally brought himself to the attention of Richard Talbehr, Müden's heir apparent, when he almost swindled the young nobleman out of several thousand gold pieces with one of his more spectacular schemes. The unfortunate young halfling landed in the city gaol.

Talbehr, however, found himself intrigued by the audacity and skill of the thief. Looking into Theofold's background, he found that the would-be scam artist had already amassed a small fortune in treasure, all appropriated through shady deals and trickery just shy of being illegal. In fact, Talbehr had to admit that the scheme Theofold used to ensnare him was subtle and devious—but technically legal. He ordered Theofold released into his custody on the condition the halfling explain to him how he generated ideas for his schemes.

Theofold told the noble his theory: Every time the nobles and the merchants create a new law, they build a new business. He went on to explain several loopholes in Müden's rather restrictive anti-smuggling laws that made an aspiring scam artist's job easy.

From then on, Theofold worked for Talbehr. At first, he accepted a rather hefty monthly fee to point out such loopholes, thinking the noble wanted to exploit them for his own benefit. He learned nearly a year afterward, however, that the young heir desired to clean up Müden's muddled trade laws and divisive guild structure. The thief found Talbehr worked not for his own benefit or the benefit of the nobility, but to strengthen Müden's emerging middle class.

Eventually, Richard Talbehr became Count of Müden, and Theofold his chief lieutenant. Within a few months, Theofold established himself as a regent in his own right, unifying Müden's guilds into the Seelundkaufen ("Sea and Land Traders"). He turned several tiny, unprofitable guilds into a working network of trading and shipping holdings.

Theofold still acts as Richard Talbehr's chief lieutenant, assisting in the governance of the count's provinces and law holdings when necessary. Most often, however, he comes to the aid of his friend when the count has economic concerns.

**Lieutenant notes:** Theofold can be considered a skilled lieutenant when dealing with economic or espionage problems (such as common trade difficulties or the corruption/crime, assassination, and intrigue random events). As a halfling, Theofold enjoys a naturally long life span; he remains in excellent health and can be lured away for occasional adventuring.

## Araesane Rozel

5th-level Anuirean paladin

**S:** 18/77

**D:** 15

**C:** 16

**I:** 11

**W:** 14

**Ch:** 18

**AL:** LG

**AC:** -2

**hp:** 46

**MV:** 9

**THAC0:** 16 (15 with morning star)

**#AT:** 1

**Dmg:** 2d4/1d6+1

**Bloodline:** None.

**Special Equipment:** Field plate, shield +2 (with Haelyn's symbol).

**Proficiencies:** Composite bow, Dagger, Hand Axe, Law, Leadership, Long sword, Morning Star, Strategy.

**Description/History:** Araesane Rozel began life wanting to become a priest. For as long as he could remember, he believed his life dedicated to the glory of Haelyn and destined to be spent in cloisters. However, life did not work out the way Araesane planned.

A commoner, Araesane worked the fields of southern Alamie. When his lord summoned him to serve in a levy raised to defend the borders against Ghoere's incursions, Araesane went. He grieved, thinking he might have to use his god-given strength to end another human life, but he knew Haelyn encouraged defense and justice—and Araesane believed the Duke of Alamie followed Haelyn's dictates.

Araesane served as a border guard during three turbulent months.

No

war broke out, but Ghoere's cavalry and scouts could be seen in the distance, and rumors of skirmishes along the border spread through the peasant levies.

Meanwhile, Araesane talked to the priests sent to comfort the soldiers and tend to the wounded. They had little to do most days, since Ghoere's armies seemed content to stay on their side of the border. They instructed Araesane in the ways of Haelyn, continuing his rudimentary education from the point where his village priest had left off.

Araesane enjoyed this period of his life. He learned the ways of a soldier during the day, and the ways of Haelyn at night. He thought the duke had done him a favor by taking him out of the farm fields for a few months.

He was wrong.

When tensions between Ghoere and Alamie settled, Araesane returned home to find his village sacked and nearly destroyed. His family gone, Araesane wandered toward the capital hoping for some word.

Eventually, Araesane went to the royal magistrate and asked for help in finding his siblings and mother. The magistrate turned him away. "Bandits passed through two months ago raiding the settlements," the magistrate said. The bandits, it seemed, knew that all the local men and women of fighting strength would be off in the levies, and they profited from this knowledge.

The news enraged Araesane. His lord called him into service to protect the land, but his lord had not protected Araesane's land or family in turn. For a time, Araesane contemplated revenge upon the Duke of Alamie. His innate sense of justice fueled his desire for vengeance, but the thought of rebelling against his sovereign disgusted him. He wandered the provinces of Alamie pondering his dilemma.

Araesane believes Haelyn intervened then, saving him from a misspent life of banditry and vengeance. Araesane came upon a small settlement besieged by bandits. Another levy had been called, drawing the fighting men and women away, and the bandits knew it. They did not know about Araesane, however.

Inspired by his anger, Araesane used his military training to sneak up on the bandit camp.

He defeated the leader of the bandits in a fair fight (for his part; the other bandits

tried to interfere). He then routed the rest of the dispirited band and saved the settlement.

Since that time, Araesane has roamed Anuire and even Khinasi lands, righting wrongs and bringing the word and justice of Haelyn to those who most need it. Recently, local magistrates, province rulers, and regents have asked Araesane to mediate in matters of justice—his reputation for fairness has spread through the commonfolk. Some minor regents have offered Araesane permanent employment, but he hasn't decided upon a post—yet.

**Lieutenant notes:** A young man, Araesane Rozel would make an able adventuring companion for any regent. He can also act on his own (as he has shown), though he won't participate in any deceit or trickery. A regent who employs him under false pretenses shouldn't expect a successful venture.

Araesane can be considered a *skilled* lieutenant in any situation that involves adventuring or a respect for law and justice (virtually any random event, except natural event, diplomatic matter, or trade matter). He always acts in the best interests of the common people—though that might put him into conflict with his regent.

## karida bint deila

*4th-level Khinasi thief,  
Secretary of Police in Mesire*

S: 9  
D: 17  
C: 13  
I: 16  
W: 14  
Ch: 15

AL: LN  
AC: 3  
hp: 18  
MV: 12  
THAC0: 19  
#AT: 2 (daggers in both hands)  
Dmg: 1d4

**Bloodline:** None.

**Special Equipment:** Leather armor +1, daggers (balanced for throwing), lock picks, badge of office.

**Proficiencies:** Dagger, Disguise, Short Sword, Sling, Law, Local History, Set Snares.

**Description/History:** Karida bint Deila learned her thieving skills on the right side of the law. A special operative in Mesire's small police force, she often disguised herself as a thief or a smug-

gler, catching would-be criminals in the act.

Karida grew up in a powerful ajazada family. Several years ago, her parents died at the hands of assassins working for the infamous Brotherhood of Khet. Karida does not hold a grudge, however—she'd just like to see every member of the brotherhood roasted over a slow fire in the public square. Nothing personal.

But this attitude did not endear her to the wizard Yousef ibn Reghil el-Mesir, the regent of the realm. He, too, hates the brotherhood (its members assassinated his wife), but he never believed shared hatred ought to form a basis for trust. Reluctant to put a woman in a position of authority over his small police force, he made certain Karida's appointments and promotions came slowly and with difficulty.

Fortunately for the realm and for el-Mesir, Karida ignored her regent's old-fashioned ideals and continued doing the best she could at every job she had. Learning from the best street-thieves of Mesire and making important friends in the Zhainge Merchant Guild, she gained ability and allies quickly. Eventually, when the old chief of the police force retired under the black cloud of scandal, Karida's influential family pressured the regent to appoint Karida head of the force.

The emir reacted with an unprecedented move. He appointed Karida secretary of the police force—on a trial basis. For centuries, no other public official had been required to serve a probationary period. Usually, if the emir does not have a candidate in mind for a particular office, he leaves the post vacant until he finds a suitable official.

But Karida ignored this insult. She coolly accepted the position though her friends and colleagues felt sure she would resign. She brought her first major case to a close in record time, outwitting a band of independent smugglers and assassins intent upon contesting the Zhainge Merchant Guild's rightful holdings in the capital.

Then she resigned.

This step put the emir in an awkward position. Belatedly recognizing Karida's competence and intelligence, he graciously accepted her resignation as Probationary Secretary of Police—and immediately installed her as the official Secretary of Police. The emir took both actions publicly, acknowledging his error and apologizing for it (without actually referring to his mistake openly). He also awarded Karida bint Diela a badge of *sayarimin* (recognition) for her recent achievements. Karida returned to his service and has worked faithfully for the emir and Mesire ever since.

**Lieutenant notes:** Karida seldom acts on the emir's behalf in any capacity other than as a police officer. Efficient, intelligent, and active, she takes a much more hands-on role in law enforcement than did her predecessors. Karida can act as a skilled representative of the emir in any legal area, and might be persuaded to tackle adventures into the Direwood if necessary.

## NEVA OUAZZKY

3rd-level Vos ranger

**S:** 17

**D:** 15

**C:** 15

**I:** 12

**W:** 15

**Ch:** 8

**AL:** NG

**AC:** 3

**hp:** 22

**MV:** 12

**THAC0:** 18

**#AT:** 2 (sword and dagger)

**Dmg:** 1d8 and 1d4

**Bloodline:** Vorynn, minor, 9.

**Blood Abilities:** None.

**Special Equipment:** Leather armor, *cloak of protection +2*, *ring of protection +2*.

**Proficiencies:** Battle Axe, Bowyer/Fletcher, Dagger, Long Bow, Sword, Endurance, Hunting.

**Description/History:** Neva grew up along the borders of the Icemarch, in view of both the northern glaciers and the great Grovnekevic Forest where the Vos and the elves of Tuar Annwn have fought a cold war for centuries. Hardened by the climate and the temperament of her people, Neva still managed to attain a peace—of sorts—within herself. She longs to pacify her warlike people and end the war the Vos fight with all the other races of Cerilia.

Still, Neva isn't some idealistic dreamer. She left her frozen home and traveled south, east, and west, learning about Vosgaard, Brechtür, and even northern Khinasi. She has battled orogs, ice trolls, and gnolls, and she has learned to hide from the ice giants and greater beasts of the fells. Neva

knows when to fight and when to retreat—and she's tried to pass this knowledge on to the few friends she's made over the years.

Neva wants to become regent of a forest domain. She realizes that existing regents fill even the frozen lands of Vosgaard, but Neva believes she could do better for the people of those realms if only she could take over.

The Vos ranger knows she has much to learn, however, before she can take over a realm. Currently, Neva quests for a likely teacher—preferably a regent of a province, law holding, or guild domain who can instruct her in the ways of regency. She knows her bloodline may be thin now, but she hopes to strengthen it by deposing an evil monarch and taking her place as a leader among the Vos.

Initially, Neva wants to serve a good leader, so she can learn regency from a master. Eventually, she plans to ingratiate herself with an evil lord and perhaps turn his other lieutenants and advisers against him. If Neva can do this, she feels she can seize power and lead a revolution in a small domain. With luck, she can expand her realm to encompass other domains entrapped by the web of evil.

**Lieutenant notes:** Since Neva desires to become a regent in her own right someday, she wants to learn how to perform all of a regent's responsibilities while serving another master. Unfortunately, with her limited experience, she acts as an *unskilled* assistant under most circumstances, though she can be considered *skilled* when fighting monsters or dealing with bandits or brigands.

When Neva decides to make her move on a domain, she might be hindered by her native goodness. She won't commit an obviously evil act to ingratiate herself with an evil regent, but she can play-act fairly well. In all likelihood, she'll try to take over the evil regent's domain as quickly as possible—eliminating him and as many of his supporters as she can. Neva will then try to raise popular support for herself, having already made contact with important people among the commonfolk.

## alvin devlin

*8th-level Rjurik magician*

S:	12
D:	16
C:	10
I:	18

W: 15

Ch: 10

AL: LN

AC: 8

hp: 23

MV: 12

THAC0: 18

#AT: 1

Dmg: 1d4

**Bloodline:** None.

**Special Equipment:** Spellbook (disguised as lore book), light crossbow, dagger.

**Proficiencies:** Dagger, Light Crossbow, Ancient History, Animal Handling, Astrology, Reading/Writing Rjurik, Spellcraft.

**Description/History:** Alvin Devlin learned his trade in southern Rjurik lands and hides it well. In a region where magicians and wizards hang around a lot (mainly from trees), Alvin keeps his spellcasting abilities secret to all but a few of his most trusted friends—and, of course, the regent he serves.

Alvin grew up knowing he had elven blood in his veins. His mother looked elven, and, though she did not inherit her mother's near-agelessness, she did pick up another "gift"—the ability to cast wizard spells, which she used sparingly and secretly.

His mother tried to teach Alvin wizard spells as well, but he could not manage to pull the mebh-aighl from the land as easily as she did. Only illusions and divinations came to Alvin easily, and he soon abandoned his studies of other magics.

Unfortunately, Alvin's practices led to suspicious rumors spread by his neighbors. Fearing "unholy" magics in the area, the local farmers and trappers summoned a druid to investigate Alvin and his mother's secret meetings in the woods. Exposed as spellcasters, they fled into the Aelvinnwode only a step or two ahead of their pursuers. Exhausted and terrified, they waited for the end to come.

Fortune smiled on the two spellcasters then. A band of elf warriors encountered the hunters and drove them out of the wood, saving the young man and his mother. Recognizing her obvious elven blood, the warriors took the pair into Tuarhievel where, to their surprise, Alvin's mother was reunited with her own parent.

Alvin's mother decided to stay, but Alvin himself grew restless. Feeling like an outsider in a land that nevertheless welcomed him as a kinsman, he made his way back to Rjurik, avoiding his old homestead. He disguised his magical talents and went to work in Stjordvik, Halskapa, and even

Hogunmark as an adventurer and adviser.

Eventually, Alvin distinguished himself enough as an adventurer to win the attention of noble adventurers in several realms. Now he has been offered a lieutenant position in at least one realm, but he hasn't taken the office yet. He hopes to bring about a tolerance for nondruidic magic in Rjurik if he can, and he wants to make certain whatever regent he serves feels the same way.

**Lieutenant notes:** An experienced adventurer and diplomat, Alvin should be considered *skilled* as an assistant in nearly any endeavor. Unfortunately, if he serves as a lieutenant in the Rjurik region, there's always a chance someone will find out about his magician abilities. If that situation arises, it could have dire consequences for Alvin and the regent he serves.

## acquiring lieutenants

As explained in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook* regents can acquire lieutenants through use of the lieutenant action. The chance of success or failure is left up to the DM. If this provision seems unnecessarily nebulous, consider the situation. A lieutenant should be a trusted henchman or adventuring ally the PC has known for years. No regent simply posts a notice with the local crier saying "Second-in-Command Wanted—Apply at Castle." Lieutenants evolve out of years, or at least months, of service.

But how can the DM reflect the evolution of such a relationship in the context of domain actions? Should he penalize new regents, waiting until they have encountered and enlisted several NPCs to choose from, before allowing a PC regent to select a lieutenant?

Perhaps. Perhaps not.

The solution depends on the situation and the style of the campaign. If a beginning PC regent really wants a lieutenant and can help the DM create a background story with a good reason behind the appointment of such a skilled and trusted assistant, then the DM should probably allow the commission. If the campaign focuses heavily on domain actions and less on adventuring (circumstances in which the PC might actually encounter candidates for lieutenancy), then the DM should seriously consider this option.

Ideally, PC regents won't want lieutenants until they've experienced enough adventure to encounter characters they trust with access to the powers of their domain. The lieutenant examples provided above—particularly the ones already linked to specific realms—describe NPCs who have long interacted with their regents.

## inheriting lieutenants

If a PC regent inherits a domain in which a lieutenant served the previous regent, the PC might acquire the lieutenant along with the rest of the domain. This possibility is *completely* up to the DM. If he thinks the NPC lieutenant has a good enough reason to stick around and serve the new regent, he will. Otherwise, he departs for greener pastures or perhaps retires and takes the role of an adviser (see below).

When a PC regent inherits a lieutenant, he might actually acquire a lieutenant of greater ability than he normally might be able to attract. For example, a 12th-level ranger serves as lieutenant. The domain's ruler dies or steps down, leaving the regency to his heir (the PC). Presumably, the heir has been groomed for this contingency. But the heir has achieved only 3rd level and, according to the rules, can't have a 12th-level lieutenant. The DM can handle this complication in several ways:

- **The lieutenant leaves.** The faithful lieutenant steps down from his post, since he served the older regent, not the realm. He may or may not recommend a successor—perhaps one of his own trusted henchmen—to take over the lieutenancy.
- **The lieutenant stays on as lieutenant.** He desires to continue serving the PC regent and the realm in his full capacity. He still performs domain actions for the regent and deals with random events. The DM warns the player, however, that if the NPC lieutenant goes out on adventures with the PC, or starts to do all of the "hard" work of running the domain, the PC regent will stop gaining experience points and probably lose loyalty and support around the realm.
- **The lieutenant stays on as an adviser.** He voluntarily takes himself "out of action." He retires from active adventuring or declares he's interested in only occasional adventures or political moves, but agrees to stick around and use his experience to help the new regent as an adviser (see below).
- **The lieutenant becomes a vassal.** As part of the PC's ascension, he grants the faithful lieutenant part of the domain to rule in his name. This solution works only with lieu-

tenants who have bloodlines. The NPC lieutenant sticks around (at least in the general area) and is considered a vassal of the PC regent, but has his own problems to worry about. The PC regent can go to him for help or advice, and the DM has an excellent opportunity to involve him in adventures and domain actions when he wants to—and even better reason for *not* involving the former lieutenant when he doesn't want to. This method also makes the new regent pay for the services of a high-level ally; he loses direct control over part of his realm in exchange for the high-level lieutenant's loyalty and continued service.

Of course, all of these solutions might prove temporary. When the PC regent progresses in level and experience, and has adventures of his own, he might choose to dismiss the older lieutenant (if he is still around) or call him back out of retirement (when the PC attains a high enough level to have him as a henchman).

## player character lieutenants

Player characters can serve other PCs and NPCs as lieutenants. In a cooperative BIRTHRIGHT campaign, this option proves an excellent way to get everyone—blooded and unblooded characters alike—involved in domain actions. Any PC can serve as a lieutenant, from an unblooded commoner to a blooded regent (generally, however, PC regents become vassals if they want to serve other PCs or NPCs). If a regent names a PC his lieutenant, the DM can choose to ignore the level limitations for henchmen and lieutenants.

The DM should handle a PC lieutenant a little differently than an NPC assistant. Most NPC lieutenants automatically perform services (successfully or unsuccessfully) for their regents.

Player characters, naturally, have freedom of choice. When a regent wants his PC lieutenant to do something, he instructs him, gives him the resources necessary (Regency

Points, Gold Bars, and/or other domain resources such as armies or assistants), and sends him off to do it. The PC, however, might choose to do something else entirely. This decision probably won't please the regent he serves, but that's the PC's problem.

Player character lieutenants, just like NPC lieu-

tenants, can perform *one* action on behalf of their regents per domain turn. Should another lieutenant perform a domain action that turn, the PC lieutenant loses his opportunity. This condition can give rise to some interesting role-playing: If several lieutenants work for an individual regent, they'll probably lobby for the privilege of serving their lord to prove both their loyalty and their indispensability.

## paying lieutenants

The rules do not state how much gold or other wealth a lieutenant requires to keep him in service. In most cases, lieutenant pay comes out of the regent's domain maintenance and court costs. This does *not* mean, however, that a lieutenant can't ask for (and receive) additional funds or considerations. The DM should decide this matter with the player on an individual basis. Particularly valuable or active lieutenants might require more upkeep than normal, and the DM might require the PC to actually pay his lieutenant(s) above and beyond normal domain maintenance.

Keep in mind, however, that most lieutenants serve the regent because they *want* to do so. The regent should reward them adequately—with money, small luxuries, and magical items when possible—but he can usually work these payments into his domain maintenance costs, or role-playing sessions for special rewards. If the DM requires additional payments to the lieutenant, they should reflect special service by the character. The 12th-level ranger from the above example might need an additional 1 GB per domain turn partly because he's such a high-level lieutenant serving a relatively inexperienced regent, but mostly because he has a whole network of followers and henchmen of his own to support—and they all work in the service of the regent. In return, the PC receives better service out of the ranger than he could expect from an average lieutenant.

Spellcasting lieutenants often require supplemental maintenance as well. A wizard, magician, or priest lieutenant likely will cast spells in the regent's service. He needs money for components, assistants, and research. In general, the regent shouldn't have to pay more than 1 GB every domain turn to support a magic-wielding lieutenant, but the regent must expect to pay for any realm spells or special material components used in the regent's service. The regent pays for the privilege of having a wizard, magician, or priest "on call." Actually using the lieutenant might cost extra.

# advisers

Often, advisers are 0-level characters with special knowledge or wisdom garnered from years of court life and practice. Occasionally, a regent's advisers might be retired or semi-retired adventurers (military commanders often fit into this range) with a small amount of "field" experience. Only rarely do advisers actually have experience levels exceeding those of the regents they serve.

The advisers detailed in this section can be used by the DM as "the voice of experience." They cannot, except on rare occasions, perform domain actions for the regent. (A domain action might involve them, especially in a role-playing sense, but they are not lieutenants.) An adviser might be told to address a particular random event, depending on its nature. In most cases, however, the DM uses the adviser as a voice of reason to talk to the PC regent.

But the counsel that advisers provide is not infallible. Far from it: A regent goes to advisers to get *advice*, not to give up his power. A particular adviser has specific knowledge the PC regent lacks (otherwise he wouldn't be necessary) and can offer a different perspective on problems. But economic advisers see situations in financial terms, military advisers turn problems into war exercises, and civil advisers put everything into a social and political context. The regent himself must synthesize the conflicting counsel he receives and make decisions from a holistic perspective.

Advisers, more so than lieutenants and henchmen, should serve as a tool of the DM. The Dungeon Master ought to develop the PC regent's advisers. He has to *know* their areas of knowledge, interest, and personal agendas—so he can slant their advice accordingly.

The following advisers serve as examples of these important NPCs. With a little modification, they fit into just about any environment in Cerilia.

## daeg merwynidin

**Race:** Elf.

**Major Areas of Knowledge:** Elven lore, human-elf relations, linguistics.

**Minor Areas of Knowledge:** Diplomacy, general history, military strategy, monsters.

**Proficiencies (ratings):** Ancient History (17), Diplomacy (9), Local History—the domain (15), Languages—all human (15), Languages—dwarven (12), Strategy (8).

**Role-playing Notes:** An elf, Daeg Merwynidin has lived for hundreds of years in the great woods of the continent, avoiding humans as most of his brethren do. Now he has taken an interest in exploring the outside world.

Naturally curious, Daeg uses his knowledge and adviser position to learn information—particularly about the history of the region in which he currently finds employment. He could enlist in the service of a human, elf, or dwarf regent—so long as he feels he could learn something new.

When consulted regarding his areas of knowledge, Daeg tends to be fairly patient and conservative. He favors diplomacy over warfare, and caution over recklessness. However, if a regent assigns Daeg a task normally outside his ability or asks advice on a topic with which Daeg is unfamiliar, the elf rises to the occasion—often with disastrous results. His curiosity gets the better of him; in the past, he has caused more trouble by not admitting to his shortcomings.

**Special Strengths:** Hale and hearty, Daeg has no fear of accompanying his regent on adventures. While he won't contribute much to a fight, he can provide up-to-the-minute advice, translation, and analysis.

**Special Weaknesses:** As mentioned above, Daeg has an insatiable curiosity. He can be lured into traps by those who know him, and he often extends advice not for the betterment of his regent but for the satisfaction of his own curiosity.

## stanislaus yurivauch

**Race:** Human (Vos).

**Major Areas of Knowledge:** Military strategy, Vos religions, other human religions.

**Minor Areas of Knowledge:** Civil authority, diplomacy, weather and natural phenomenon.

**Proficiencies (ratings):** Ancient History (10), Diplomacy (8), Herbalism (10), Law (9), Religion—Belinik and Kriesha (18), Strategy (10).

**Role-playing Notes:** The Vos seldom value advisers who cannot practice what they preach, but old Stanislaus Yurivauch learned how to make his intelligence work for him in a land that values the axe head more than the wise head. Yurivauch thought early in life about entering the priesthood of Belinik, but found its

ways of worship too brutal and direct for his tastes. Instead, he became a rare theologian in a region of fanatics—studying religion and its accompanying military strategy without actually becoming a war priest or fanatic warrior.

Now, Stanislaus uses his knowledge in the service of his regent. His insights into Vos religion provide him with wisdom about violence and fanaticism. He prefers to observe and discuss solutions to problems rather than implement them. Under no circumstances can Stanislaus be counted upon as an adventuring companion—he might resign or desert before placing himself in direct danger.

**Special Strengths:** The Vos threaten many realms, and Stanislaus understands their religion and the core of their being. He can observe violence and fanaticism without being caught up in it, and as long as he personally isn't threatened, he can think coolly and calmly.

**Special Weaknesses:** Threats of personal violence to Stanislaus cause him to lose effectiveness quickly. He especially fears his own people, knowing their treatment of noncombatants often can be worse than their treatment of enemies. Whether Stanislaus serves a Vos or non-Vos regent, he will try to avoid any situation that puts him in contact with enemy Vos—even a diplomatic setting.

## blaese grumbahl

**Race:** Human (Anuirean).

**Major Area of Knowledge:** Economics.

**Minor Areas of Knowledge:** Finances, intrigue, law, taxation.

**Proficiencies (ratings):** Administration (17), Appraisal (15), Forgery (12), Intrigue (9), Law (12).

**Role-playing Notes:** Born to a very minor noble family, Blaese Grumbahl found she had to begin working at an early age or lose what little social standing she might ever possess.

Blaese began as a junior assistant to a foreman in a local trade guild and worked her way up from there. She quickly took to reading and writing, and could do her sums accurately before she reached her teens. Accounting proved to be Blaese's greatest love, and she created whole domains out of the numbers she learned to manipulate.

Recognizing her value, the guildmasters trained Blaese in more complicated accounting procedures. Eventually, she came to the notice of the local regent. She became his economic adviser the day she showed him how he could save nearly 25% of his normal domain maintenance costs without losing any of his realm's effectiveness.

Old and stooped from squinting over giant ledgers, Blaese seldom attends court functions or general meetings of the other regents' advisers. Generally, she is seen as a coin-clutching crone with a heart as cold as gold. In reality, Blaese has dedicated herself to her work and serves her regent faithfully. She has no problem spending the regent's money—but she always makes certain he gets what he pays for.

**Special Strengths:** Blaese won't be taken in a scam or scheme to defraud the regent's treasury. She knows where the smallest coin in the most remote holding of the land should be, and her subordinates give tax evaders fits. Blaese seldom needs to consult her ledgers to state any economic figure her regent might require of her—she has a complete knowledge of her kingdom's finances and economic futures.

**Special Weaknesses:** The economic adviser dislikes dealing directly with people—even the regent she serves so faithfully. She prefers her books and ledgers, and often acts coldly and rudely with those who might trouble her for advice (even while she is flattered by their attentions). Blaese tends to think of everything in economic terms—a war might be fought for other reasons than safeguarding profitable holdings or achieving a profit in its own right, but Blaese won't see it that way.

## using adviser skills and knowledge

Generally, a regent can use his adviser's skills and knowledge whenever and however he wishes. For example, if a regent has an adviser with the Administration nonweapon proficiency, he can put his adviser in charge of paying the maintenance and court costs for his kingdom—thereby using the proficiency as if the regent had it himself. Of course, this strategy works only if the regent has the foresight to assign his adviser to the task in the first place.

Advisers nearly always work on only one task at a time. Should an adviser be assigned to use his Administration proficiency to maintain the domain more efficiently, he can't also be assigned to assist his regent with a trade route action or to engage in intricate diplomacy with a foreign re-

gent. The DM might decrease the adviser's proficiency ratings dramatically if he feels the adviser is being misused or overworked.

## creating advisers

Creating or attracting advisers is generally easier than finding a lieutenant. If the regent has an NPC in mind for the post, he can simply offer the character a job and work out terms of payment or service (see below) as part of a role-playing session. PC advisers can be treated in the same way—no special outlay of resources should be necessary to have another PC “on staff” unless the two players decide otherwise.

If the regent does not have a particular character in mind for an adviser position, he can issue a decree to search for an adviser. Generally, this decree opens the way for advisers from other realms, or nobles and commoners from all over, to apply at the court for the position. The regent has little control over the types of people who answer his call—though he should probably find at least a few serious candidates from whom to choose.

The base chance of success for finding an appropriate adviser through a decree action is 5+. If the regent fails this check, his decree wasn't taken seriously or he simply didn't appeal to the right people. If the DM wants to make a role-playing session of the selection, the PC might interview several candidates and actually find someone among them who could serve his needs—though that person might not be *exactly* what he wanted.

As with many other domain actions, the regent can spend Regency Points and Gold Bars to increase his chance of success. This expenditure represents the amount of time and money he and his trusted subordinates spend to find just the right adviser. Again, the DM can have the player role-play the final interview process, but in this case virtually all of the candidates should be at least minimally qualified.

## attracting special advisers

As stated above, advisers tend to be 0-level characters with a few strong skills and areas of knowledge. They aren't competent lieutenants, and they probably never went on adventures. However, they often know quite a bit about things the regent himself has no time to learn.

However, a regent might attract a *special* adviser, someone considered “the best in the land” at what he does. With such an adviser on his

staff, the regent gains special bonuses to domain actions performed in this NPC's area of expertise.

The success roll for attracting a special adviser is always 20+. However, when a regent expends Regency Points or Gold Bars to increase his chances of finding an adviser in the first place, he increases his chances for finding a special adviser as well.

If the regent rolls a modified 20+, he gains a special adviser. If he exceeded the required roll by 1 to 4 points, he gains an adviser who gives him a +1 on the performance of *one* domain action every domain turn (or an equivalent bonus decided by the DM). This bonus should reflect the adviser's areas of knowledge and the focus of the decree. If the regent decreed that he was looking for an economic adviser, the special economic adviser might give him a +1 to performing a trade route action, or lower his domain maintenance costs by 10%—or help the regent out in other economic or financial ways. These bonuses compound with any other modifiers the regent already has.

When the regent exceeds the required roll by 5 to 9 points, he gains a special adviser with either two separate +1 modifiers, or a +2 (or the equivalent) bonus. If the regent exceeds the required roll by 10 or more points, the special adviser adds +3 to one action, or +1 to three domain actions (or a +1 and a +2).

Keep in mind that the adviser *still* can't perform actions on his own. The regent (or the regent's lieutenant) can seek his counsel on domain actions and receive the modifier, but the adviser has no ability or authority to perform domain actions himself.

## PC advisers

While player characters usually don't serve as advisers, this role could satisfy many players (particularly those with long-time adventurers they wish to put into semi-retirement in favor of younger PCs). A PC adviser could use his skills and knowledge to advise a PC or NPC regent, and then enter into adventures on his own behalf or his regent's.

## paying advisers

An average court probably has a large number of courtiers and advisers whose expenses compose part of the domain and court maintenance costs. Only special advisers or notable NPCs or PCs need additional support. Basically, the more an adviser can do for a regent, the more upkeep he'll need. Average advisers, with a few useful skills and specialized knowledge, don't cost any extra. Those who contribute modifiers to domain actions might cost an extra 1 GB every domain turn (or every other domain turn). Remember, advisers have to be cost-effective. An adviser who contributes a +1 bonus to one of his regent's domain actions might not be worth 1 GB per turn, since the regent could spend that much and increase the modifier himself. Granted, he wouldn't have access to the advice and skills of the adviser, but he might try getting along without them.

## promoting an adviser to lieutenant

After years of service, a regent might decide to promote a trusted adviser to the position of lieutenant, giving him the ability to perform domain actions on the ruler's behalf. If that happens, the adviser retains all his skills and abilities and, if he was a special adviser, still modifies domain actions in the same manner.

## henchmen

The *Player's Handbook* defines henchmen as adventurers who serve PCs or NPCs out of loyalty. They will risk their lives and fortunes for those they respect—and therefore are hard to find. Most lieutenants start out as henchmen, and should still be considered as such in most cases.

Usually, henchmen should be of lower level than the PCs or NPCs they serve.

Granted, in the BIRTHRIGHT setting, characters with powerful bloodlines can command great respect and power and thereby attract higher-level henchmen than PCs in other game worlds (see the lieutenant

domain action in the *Rulebook*). Still, henchmen tend to be of about the same level as the characters for whom they work.

Henchmen are more important to regents than to the average adventurer. While a PC might trust his henchmen with his goods and his life, the PC regent trusts them with his realm and holdings as well. Good henchmen should be hard to find—but invaluable, once found.

## types of henchmen

Rather than supplying individual sample henchmen, this section discusses some types of henchmen a PC regent might attract. Each is listed by the position or role he might fulfill in a PC regent's domain.

### beater of the bounds

The title “Beater of the Bounds” actually describes an active adventurer in the employ of the regent. The “bounder” patrols the borders of the realm (or visits the central sites of a domain) and keeps monsters, undesirables, and other physical threats away.

**Preferred character classes:** Fighter, ranger.

**Preferred proficiencies:** Any melee weapon, any missile weapon, Animal Handling, Animal Lore, Animal Training, Direction Sense, Fire-building, Hunting, Jumping, Languages (local), Law, Local History, Mountaineering, Riding (land-based), Set Snares, Survival, Tracking, Weather Sense.

**Character description:** The bounder operates by himself or with small groups of hirelings, and so must be trustworthy and self-motivated. He must also maintain a keen perspective and the ability to judge for himself whether someone or something poses a threat to the domain he protects. The bounder needs self-confidence and assurance to make decisions on his own—and to know when he cannot handle a situation by himself.

### captain of the guard

While most regents trust retainers or military personnel to guard their persons on a day-to-day basis, the wise regent places a loyal henchman in charge of maintaining and watching these guards. A fixture in most domains, the captain of the guard keeps the court orderly and the regent safe.

**Preferred character classes:** Fighter, paladin.

**Preferred proficiencies:** Any melee weapon,

Blind-fighting, Disguise, Endurance, Heraldry, Intrigue, Languages (local), Law, Reading/Writing, Riding (land-based), Set Snares, Tracking.

**Character description:** Close to the regent at all times, the captain of the guard has to be attentive and imposing, while at the same time able to fade into the background and watch those around him. The captain must have a perceptive eye, able to discern suspicious actions at a glance and remember faces and mannerisms of people encountered only in passing.

## loremaster

A loremaster nearly falls into the “adviser” role, but might make a valuable adventuring companion for the regent. A loremaster does not have to be an ancient man or woman who spends all his or her time studying musty old books and nearly indecipherable scrolls. The loremaster might be a character seeking knowledge—and providing it to the regent upon request.

**Prefer red character classes:** Magician, wizard, bard, priest.

**Prefer red proficiencies:** Any “peasant” knowledge (Agriculture, Animal Skills, Mining, etc.), Ancient History, Appraising, Astrology, Heraldry, Herbalism, Languages (local, distant, and ancient), Local History, Reading/Writing, Religion.

**Character description:** The adventuring loremaster complements the regent’s own skills and those of his other henchmen by providing much-needed knowledge and advice as it is required. Hardier and more practical on adventures than typical advisers, the loremaster can make himself useful on important quests and take some of the burden off his regent. When they need it the most, he provides knowledge and skills most regents don’t have the time or inclination to learn themselves.

## personal physician

A healer who might go into danger to protect and preserve the regent’s life should have the status of a henchman. A personal physician should be valued greatly by adventuring and nonadventuring regents alike. Often the personal physician himself can become the target of assassins desiring to eliminate the regent by stealthy means.

**Preferred classes:** Priest, paladin.

**Prefer red proficiencies:** Ancient History, Brewing, Fire-building, Healing, Herbalism, Local History, Religion, Spellcraft.

**Character description:** The personal physician must be trustworthy in situations where a slip-up

or inaction could cause the regent’s death—and no one would know the difference. A mere hireling or court doctor might be fine for treating common illnesses, but in a crisis, the personal physician should be the only one trusted with the regent’s life.

## sheriff

Particularly useful for law regents and province rulers, the sheriff finds employment under any regent. While most people associate sheriffs with upholding the law of a region, a sheriff might serve another purpose in other holdings. When working for a high priest, for example, the sheriff might oversee the collection of tithes. He could also mediate church-related disputes among commoners or help organize temple-funded levies.

**Prefer red character classes:** Fighter, ranger, thief.

**Prefer red proficiencies:** Any melee weapon, any ranged weapon, Appraising, Hunting, Languages (local), Local History, Mountaineering, Reading/Writing, Rope Use, Set Snares.

**Character description:** The sheriff, like the beater of the bounds, must maintain a certain amount of personal authority to be effective. The sheriff, however, concerns himself with internal problems and the people and holdings already ruled by the regent. He maintains order and enforces the regent’s rules.

## spy

While tales around court malign the spy, he provides a valuable service for his regent. Not only does the spy brave the dangers of other domains and realms to gather information, he also might be in charge of the security within the regent’s domain—since a spy stands the best chance of catching another spy.

**Prefer red character classes:** Thief, bard, magician.

**Prefer red Proficiencies:** Easily-concealable melee or missile weapons (dagger, dart, sling), “cover” proficiency (Dancing, Heraldry, Musical Instrument, Singing, etc.), Appraising, Diplomacy, Direction Sense, Disguise, Etiquette, Forgery, Intrigue, Languages (local) and dis-

tant), Reading/Writing, Reading Lips, Rope Use, Running, Tightrope Walking, Tumbling, Survival.

**Character description:** Too often, unwise regents consider the spy a mere hireling or distasteful tool. A successful regent recognizes that an able spy might be the most loyal retainer he has. The spy must often operate under deep cover, perhaps in a lowly or maligned position, and can seldom accept outright reward or recognition from his employer.

## acquiring henchmen

Players and DMs should use the basic rules presented in the *Player's Handbook* for acquiring henchmen in a BIRTHRIGHT campaign. Regents and scions may attract more henchmen than can normal characters (per the rules listed under the lieutenant domain action) but players should keep in mind that lieutenants and henchmen count toward this total.

Most regents acquire henchmen by promoting valued and talented servants or hirelings. If the DM feels comfortable running adventures with regents who bring along a few hirelings, he should start to develop the skills and personalities of those hirelings who survive.

If the hirelings accompany the regent on multiple adventures or impress him suitably, he can make them henchmen. This promotion generally means he charges them with some specific responsibilities (perhaps assigning them one of the henchman roles described above) and gives them some reward.

Quite often, a hireling becomes a henchman when the regent uses the grant domain action to give him a royal gift. This present could be a small tract of land, a special medal, a magical item, or anything else perceived to be of worth within the realm. He elevates the hireling above his peers and begins to place trust in him. Not all new henchmen need as specific a role as those outlined above, however. A henchmen might gain only a minor token of appreciation from his regent—but be known as a “companion” of the realm.

## paying henchmen

As always, the payment of henchmen should be left up to the regent

in question. Generally, the basic pay and upkeep of henchmen is included in domain and court maintenance costs—the regent doesn't have to pay extra. However, if the regent wants a happy and satisfied henchman, he should consider other rewards.

Giving a favored henchman minor gifts of gold or medals goes a long way toward securing loyalty. While mistreatment can never be bought off completely, a regent who treats his henchmen fairly and rewards them occasionally shows them he cares for them and recognizes the valuable service they do. The regent can choose to reward henchmen out of his own pocket or out of the royal treasury.

Should the regent choose to reward a henchman with magical items or special treasures, he might want to make a big deal out of the bequest—perhaps by issuing a grant. Not only does this gesture make the gift seem more important (thereby winning the henchman's loyalty even further), but it tells all other employees of the realm that they can aspire to the same.

When a regent presents a henchman with a special gift from the realm's treasury, this act almost never causes problems with loyalty among the general populace (see the “Magical Items and Artifacts” chapter of this book) because the henchmen are employees of the realm. However, when a regent presents a henchman with one of his own magical items—even if it is actually “hand-me-down”—that act impresses everyone. The regent actually rewarded the henchman with something out of his own pocket—something that probably can't be easily replaced (unlike gold).

## using henchmen in the campaign

The DM should encourage regents to gather henchmen about them. Not only is it realistic—kings and other regents should have many hirelings as well as a few trusted henchmen—it makes good gaming sense.

Adventuring in Cerilia can take many forms. The henchman can be used to provide the PC regent with adventuring motivation he might otherwise not have. If a trusted henchman—for example, the bounder—comes to the regent, tells him of a wondrous creature that has wandered into the realm, and begs him to investigate personally, the regent probably will go. This gets the regent involved in an adventure quickly and easily.

Similarly, some DMs might want to run their Cerilian campaigns on a number of levels. For example, if everyone in the campaign wants to play a regent PC, not every adventure the DM

wants to run might be appropriate. The DM can ask certain players to develop one or two of their henchmen as part-time PCs. That way, when a particular adventure comes up that wouldn't logically involve the rulers of four or five different domains—but could involve one or two and a few allied henchmen—the DM doesn't have to work so hard getting the game together. Players can even play *each other's* henchmen from time to time, allowing them to have diverse interests within the game world.

## PCs as henchmen

Player character henchmen fit into a Cerilian campaign like they do in no other game world. If someone wants to play a henchman PC in the employ of another PC or an NPC regent, that situation should work very well. It ties the PC to the campaign world, allowing him to engage in adventures and quests in which he might otherwise have little interest. Playing a henchman PC provides role-playing challenges as well—most players like to run things or assume command, but the PC henchman has to take orders.

If the PC henchman works for an NPC regent, this situation proves even more interesting. The PC henchman has responsibilities and a superior to answer to—he can't simply hare off after every quest that comes along. He must find a way to reconcile his thirst for adventure with the obligations of his job.

## A final word on able assistance

Henchmen, advisers, and lieutenants serve to flesh out the world of Cerilia and the world of the PC regent. Friendly words and advice keep player characters on track, reminding them of their positions and responsibilities. Assistants also take up some of the slack, administering their employer's kingdoms, providing needed knowledge, or just being there to help fight that big, ugly monster. Finally, a regent's assistant can also be considered the DM's assistant as well: His voice, his skills, and his sword-arm speak for the DM, providing guidance and help for the PC and player alike.

# dynasties

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*I build this realm selfishly, though not for myself. For neither I nor my people will reap the benefits of the realm that I sow today. I fertilize the land with my sweat and my blood, giving all my life to make it prosper. I do this without regret, hoping that something of my realm shall remain, fit for a son to inherit.*

—From the diaries of Boragor,  
Duke of Wierech

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**R**egents do not live forever. Even if a regent comes from the immortal elven race or has special, magical abilities that keep him from aging, no adventuring regent truly expects to survive eternally. The life of the Cerilian regent can be measured more by its accomplishments than by its length.

This fact makes the regent's realm important to him. Not only does his domain proclaim his power and influence while he lives, but it becomes a form of immortality when he dies. Most true regents desire immortality of this kind: To create a realm that lasts beyond the lifetime of its ruler is the ultimate goal of many kings and queens across Cerilia.

Most true regents hope to create or pass along dynasties to their heirs. Regents who cannot look beyond their own lives and rules seldom leave stable domains behind them. Their heirs and the nobles of the realm squabble over the regency, destroying much of what the regent built over his lifetime. Only a strong, secure dynasty can handle the passing of its head and the ascension of a new leader.

## building a dynasty

No individual regent builds a dynasty. A lucky regent inherits

the foundation of a dynasty, to which he contributes, and then passes it on to his heirs when their times come. A new regent might begin a dynasty, but it will be recognized as such only long after he has departed this world.

A dynasty does, however, begin with one regent. The regent must have the ability to look toward the future and to analyze the past if he wants to create something lasting and important that can shape Cerilia long after he is gone. The Anuirean Empire once dominated the world, with the Roele Dynasty standing atop it as the greatest dynasty in Cerilian history.

Other, lesser dynasties have existed and still exist today. The Avanils of Anuire have ruled their realm for centuries. In Brechtür, both Müden and Danigau's dynasties survived the Anuirean Occupation and the wars with the Gorgon and the Vos to thrive as examples of successful dynasties. In Rjurik lands, dynasties of families and clans have survived in Hogunmark, Hal-skapa, and Stjordvik for centuries. Some of the ancient dynasties of the Basarji in Khinasi can trace their lineage back to the time of el-Arrasi.

These examples may seem incomparable to the types of dynasties a PC regent can expect to create over the course of a campaign, but that doesn't have to be true. When combining role-playing and adventure with domain actions and war rules, players and DMs might find the years pass quickly—sometimes *too* quickly, aging characters past the point of adventuring.

This problem can actually enhance the realism of a BIRTHRIGHT campaign. Rather than playing the same PC for years of real time without keeping track of his age in game years, players of Cerilian PCs have domain turns by which to easily mark the years of their characters' lives. They know that eventually the PCs will be too old to adventure—and the aging characters know that they must pass the torch to someone else, or die heirless.

## the heir

The most important thing a PC regent can do to begin a dynasty is to designate an heir. Usually, once a regent has established himself, he starts looking toward siring or selecting an heir to ensure the continuance of his line of rulership.

In most regions of Cerilia, the heir does not have to be the regent's son or daughter. Most regents prefer passing on their power and domains to their children, but sometimes this tradition isn't possible or desirable. In these circumstances, the heir can be a trusted henchman, a

relative, or even an elected successor.

Whatever the case, the wise regent begins tutoring his heir in the ways of rulership well before that heir might logically take over the domain. Not only does this practice assure the regent that he won't pass on his domain to an heir who doesn't know how to run it, but it provides the regent with a living ally and lieutenant who can assume increasing duties and responsibilities as the regent grows older.

Players and DMs should begin talking about heirs early on in a PC regent's career. In the DM's case, the regent's advisers should start pestering the PC about the issue within a few months of the new regent assuming his throne. Advisers worry about that sort of thing almost obsessively—they want to know who they'll have to impress after the PC regent has passed on his leadership.

This concern can, and should, lead to interesting role-playing, adventuring, and domain action situations. The PC regent can be prompted (and goaded) into attending festivals and celebrations he might otherwise find dull or distracting on the pretense that he must find a suitable mate to produce an heir. Or, if the regent doesn't desire a familial heir, he can attend these events to meet and analyze the nobility of the surrounding domains—in the hopes of recruiting a trustworthy and loyal heir.

## establishing the heir

Both the player and the DM should have a hand in establishing the heir, or a few potential heirs, for a PC regent. Whether the heir is biologically related to the PC regent (a son, daughter, nephew, etc.), is someone the regent selects from a pool of likely candidates (an adventuring companion, henchman, lieutenant or the like), or both, the PC regent should select the heir he wants. In doing so, he gets to set up the yardstick by which the potential heir will be measured. If the heir apparent does not have certain skills or abilities valued by the regent, he might lose his chance to inherit.

The DM may want to generate "heir candidates" as NPCs and introduce them to the PC regent over the course of a campaign. If the candidates are the PC's own offspring, they don't actually become much of a factor until they near adventuring age—then, the regent gets to evaluate their existing abilities, skills, and personalities for himself.

The most unrealistic thing about this selection process has to do with future role-playing of the heir. Ideally, the PC regent eventually steps down

or dies, leaving one or more of the heir candidates the rulership of all or part of his realm. But, the player does not retire from the *BIRTHRIGHT* campaign—he assumes the role of the heir, as a new PC. As a result, the heir may conform remarkably to the desires of the old regent (probably in a much smoother manner than any heir ever conformed to the desires of his predecessor in the history of any real or fictional world).

But this deviation from realism in the transfer of power can be forgiven because it promotes a greater realism. The lifespan of most role-playing characters in other settings can become astounding when finally tallied at the end of a long-term campaign. In a *BIRTHRIGHT* campaign, however, the passing of years is regularly measured by domain turns and carefully-marked adventures. After a while, even the players least concerned with realism might begin to ask questions about lifespans and retirement.

## role-playing the heir

Once the heir (or candidates) reaches adventuring age, the DM should encourage the player to take him (them) on adventures—either as a henchman or lieutenant for the PC regent, or as a PC himself. This allows the player to get a feel for the new character (or characters) and develop an interest in playing what could be a drastically different character.

During this transition period, the DM might find himself indulging in a little more realism. Heirs and PC regents become a little more expendable when the players get used to developing them. As a result, the adventures can become more critical and the escapes a little more narrow. This doesn't mean the DM has a license to kill off heirs and PC regents frivolously—but he can explore more dangerous territory, knowing the player has a back-up PC he can use in a pinch.

The player should endeavor to make the heir, or heirs, unique in their personalities and goals. When the player assumes the role of an heir, he should realize that the heir's interests and goals might diverge from those of the regent character he also plays, and those of any other heirs the DM may be allowing him to role-play (in most cases, however, the player should

focus on one heir at a time, until the heir succeeds to the throne, gives up, or dies trying). This opportunity can provide very interesting role-playing and storyline situations for mature role-players. Playing two characters with overlapping, but not necessarily identical, interests stretches the player's abilities to the limit.

## dm tips regarding heirs

As mentioned above, an heir becomes something of a tool for the DM. He can experiment with new types of adventures, keyed to the new PC's interests and abilities, while still preserving the integrity of the campaign. He can, if the story calls for it, kill off an heir without worrying about the overall campaign coming to a screeching halt. Best of all, he can help the player establish a realistic line of succession that keeps the campaign focused in the same areas—even when the player wants to assume the role of a different character.

The DM should reward good role-playing of the heir by the player. Heirs of popular or powerful regents gain benefits that other starting PCs never obtain. They may have access to magical items or NPCs their successors found for them, and they probably have higher bloodline scores and perhaps even more experience than the characters that came before. If the heir isn't the offspring of an existing regent, he might even have abilities and a background foreign to the existing campaign.

## the heir as full-time pc

Eventually, the DM and/or the player will want the heir to become the full-time PC of the campaign. This doesn't mean the old regent dies or even passes on his regency—he could become an NPC ruler and the heir could take over some of the regent's responsibilities (allowing the DM to experiment with a whole new type of campaign).

Of course, the DM may have to encourage this transition. If a player has a particularly successful and interesting regent he likes to play, he won't want to give him up for a new PC at the drop of a hat.

The DM may have to offer the heir a few perks that make him seem more attractive as a candidate for full-time adventuring.

- **Bonus experience:** Depending on how long the transition period between old regent/new heir was, the new PC might not have much experience, and the player might not want to give up the power he's already attained. The DM can award the new PC some experience points gained from studying at his predecessor's knee—though these points shouldn't boost the heir more than one complete level of experience.
- **Trusted henchmen:** While most regents begin the game with hirelings or followers, they seldom start with henchmen they can really trust. The heir might gain one or two fairly powerful henchmen from his predecessor as guides and watchdogs "to keep him out of trouble" while he learns the ropes of adventuring and/or regency.
- **Better magic:** All regents have the option of beginning the game with a magical item. However, since the heir has a predecessor holding a lifetime's achievement in magical items, he might actually begin the game with a few more, or one more powerful item. This advantage might make him a match for some of his more powerful adventuring companions—and inherited foes.
- **Adventuring companions:** In some campaigns, the DM might wish to have every regent begin fostering heir candidates at the same time. However, this isn't always the case. If a low-level heir goes adventuring with a few mid- to high-level PCs, he'll learn a lot while gaining their protection—and he might get a considerable amount of experience quickly.
- **Bonus loyalty/regency:** When the heir ascends to the throne (which might not happen right away), the transition and its attendant pomp and circumstance usually boost the morale of the realm or domain he rules. Oftentimes, royal successions are cause for celebration. As a result, loyalty in most provinces should be boosted beyond normal levels, and the new regent could receive a bonus in regency for his first domain turn.
- **A staunch ally:** If the old PC regent doesn't die or disappear, the new regent or heir apparent has a powerful and devoted ally sitting on or behind the throne. The old PC could step in at certain times (meaning the player doesn't have to retire his old character permanently), or might become a valuable NPC adviser in his own right. Either way, the new PC has advantageous resources.

# the branches of dynasty

The creation of a dynasty does not end with the appointment of an heir. True dynasties expand outward, influencing and perhaps controlling more than is apparent at first glance. A true dynasty starts with a family and a succession—but ends only when the branches of the family tree cannot stretch outward any further.

For centuries, Cerilian lords often found the most destructive forces to a dynasty not in enemy armies or even friendly meddlers, but in the desires of their own ambitious family members. A regent should cultivate or produce several potential heirs to ensure one survives to succeed him. But when the regent finally designates one heir and steps down, what does he do with the other candidates? Trained and even primed for rulership, are they left out in the cold—or possibly worse, to their own devices?

Short-sighted and evil rulers take the “easy” approach. They eliminate the competition for their heirs. Killing family and friends for the sake of the dynasty is not a completely strange concept on Cerilia. The grandfather of Emperor Alándalae of Anuire is said to have done it—certainly his third daughter met no resistance from anyone upon assuming the Iron Throne. For over a century, the el-Arrasi dynasty in Ariya engaged in the public execution of each new heir’s siblings, and to this day confines them to house arrest for their entire lives. Many Vos tribes hold the practice to be the final test of a regent’s right to rule—the elimination of his own family proves he puts the realm first and above all else. Poisoners, professional duelists, and assassins all have practiced their trade on royal blood—and still do. All in the name of peaceful ascension to the throne.

But this method never truly works, not for long. Sooner or later, an heir candidate, fearing for his life, eliminates his predecessor, or his competition, or both, before he can be properly trained in the arts of rulership. Other nobles get into the act, and soon anarchy reigns. Realms and domains divide and—in the case of Rohrmarch and other such lands—waste their energies on civil war while their enemies wait for an opportunity to spring.

Less wise but well-meaning regents leave disappointed candidates alive with token rulerships or pensions when they declare an heir. Some domains become burdened with whole cadres of Baronets of the Realm, all dedicated to holding the same office, all drawing the same huge sums out of the treasury

every month. Other realms have been destroyed by this method: Granting a would-be regent only a little power makes him hunger for more, and gives him a seed with which to sow rebellion. The true heir never knows peace until he makes it himself.

The wisest regents tend to be very selective when picking their heirs—even among their own children. They make certain, right from the start, that their heirs want what’s best for the realm first, the family second, and themselves third. This isn’t an easy task, but true regency shouldn’t be.

If the regent can train his potential heirs in the arts of rulership without ever discussing ascension to the throne itself with any of them, he can keep their minds focused on the tasks at hand. If an heir thinks he will be awarded with the rulership of a particular province, or a lieutenancy, or an advisership, then he won’t be disappointed when that is all he gets. However, if the regent dangles rulership of an entire realm in front of a cabaret of possible heirs, eventually, one will seize it—and the others won’t support him because they will want it for themselves. The surprise of ascension should surprise only the one who ascends, not the entire realm.

## a final word on dynasties

The development of a dynasty should be a campaign goal for most regent PCs. While the regent may wish to conquer the world (or his part of it) in his lifetime, he should aspire to build something lasting—something that might affect the entire history of the world. Kingmakers come and go, but empire builders are few and far between.

The DM should promote this sort of goal. He ought to encourage the PCs, if they have an interest, in working together to build a dynasty or multiple dynasties. Using the “High King” campaign strategy discussed in the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook* one PC could eventually become the head of a dynasty, and the others could become his heirs, vassals, and allies.

Of course, the road to dynasty won’t be a smooth one. The other rulers on Cerilia know the benefits of dynasties, and may choose to form their own. No re-

gency should remain static for long—if the PCs don't move to build their own strongholds of familial power, the NPCs might beat them to it.

## extending the branches

If an ambitious regent plans well and achieves success during his lifetime, he may be able to reward his heirs better than they expect. The head of a dynasty might rule only one type of holding or one realm, but he might have enough power to influence succession within other domains in the same region. As a result, he could, conceivably, nurture heir candidates for several different types of realms.

Consider the Count of Müden and his chief adviser, Theofold, as an example (detailed in the Able Assistance chapter). The count inherited rulership of the provinces of Müden. He did not have any guild holdings, but he became the most powerful man in the realm. As a result, he could help Theofold, his main henchman and lieutenant, become regent of several successful guild holdings, thereby increasing his influence and rewarding a loyal retainer.

Player character regents should do the same sort of thing. When they get ready to pass on their regency to an heir, they might choose to split up their realm into parts, awarding the chief rulership to one heir and minor parts to other heirs who become his vassals. Or, if he has enough influence, the regent might decide to create new holdings for the other heirs with the proviso that they serve the new heir loyally. This way, all the heirs who proved themselves true through their service gain reward, and the dynasty expands outward, encompassing more than it once did. In Müden, the count actually gave up a small part of his realm (to the Captain of Müden), but gained more through his vassal the guildmaster.

## the foundation of empire

Throughout history, wise regents have found the ties of blood more binding than oaths of vassalage. True, familial betrayals have been a part of Cerilian history ever

since Prince Raesene became the Gorgon, but those famous betrayals are the exception, not the rule. Seldom do stories of quiet ascension and faithful service to family find their way into the legends surrounding the greatest dynasties. Only the exceptions cause bards to compose their tales of tragedy and woe.

Ever since the dissolution of the Anuirean Empire, each region has had its own problems with centralized governance. The nomadic Rjurik, a significant portion of that region's population, seldom inhabit the same territory for more than a few months at a time. Though they don't change overlords as often, they do not trust a permanent power structure.

The Anuireans, who once ruled half the continent from a central, imperial base, look back with pride and fondness on their heritage—but cannot go back to it. Too many candidates for emperor exist, and the nobles have too much pride to bow to an overlord not of unanimous choosing.

A loss of face would result if the Khinasi emirs and sultans gave up control of their realms to one regent. They rebelled against the Anuirean Occupation of their territory and hold el-Arrasi, the organizer of the Basarji Federation, among their greatest heroes. He did not espouse one government for all Khinasi states.

The independent Brechts would see centralized government as a hinderance and restriction to their trade. They respect powerful, independent states, but grow wary of counts and princes who look too far across the waters. And the Vos have established such a long tradition of battling each other that the idea of uniting would occur to them only if they faced an outside threat.

As for the nonhumans of Cerilia, the elves desire no rulership over all—though many would like to see the humans gone from a continent that has grown too small. The dwarves concern themselves only a little with outside governments, and prefer to keep their own governance to themselves. Halflings have little interest in rulership at all—they have only one known realm on Cerilia. The orogs, gnolls, and goblin realms can hardly govern themselves, let alone an empire.

So, how can a king become an emperor on Cerilia? Dynasty is the only answer. While one individual cannot hope to rally all of his or her own people to the banner of empire, a talented regent can aspire to create an empirical dynasty. Many rulers, all sprung from the same dynasty, might forge a strong enough alliance to unite enough realms to take over a region—or perhaps, the entire continent.

# military matters

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*"They say that in Vosgaard, the barbarians hunger for combat and thirst for blood. Get in the way of a Vos warrior, and you won't live to take another step.*

*"There are these cutthroat fighters called the Rovarsski who ride monstrous beasts that can rip your arm off with one bite. And if their mounts don't get you first, the warriors will slice your head off with a single blow, then eat your innards.*

*"Dekker told me the Rovarsski have been around since the Battle of Lake Laden. And I don't mean the unit—I mean the warriors themselves. 'Ding to his Uncle Eldred, the Rovarsski don't get old and they don't get sick and they never get injured in battle. They're so strong that nothin' can kill 'em. And they're so tough they can slay you with a look."*

—Kurt Alheim, 12, whispering to his younger brother, Willy, one night when both were supposed to be long asleep

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**F**rom sibling rivalry in the sandbox to armed struggles on the battlefield, the Cerilian spirit seeks to resolve conflicts through physical fighting. Each day, the cry of "War!" rings out somewhere on the continent. And each night, in council chambers and war rooms across the land, regents plot their military strategies.

Some rulers feel the fire of combat boiling their blood, urging them to achieve glory through conquest. These leaders take an active approach to war, waging it on others before it comes to them. They consider death on a battlefield the greatest honor to which a soldier can aspire, and give their troops ample opportunity to achieve it.

Other rulers avoid war, believing that there are better ways (such as diplomacy or intrigue) to resolve differences and effect change. Such a regent sees his troops as more than mere fighting machines. Each soldier represents a life—a person with a family and a future and a contribution to make to the realm. Such an asset, they believe, should not be squandered on foolish campaigns

or selfish pursuits. Yet even peaceful regents must periodically turn their thoughts to military matters. Though nonaggressive themselves, they must remain ever vigilant against the sleeping lions who surround them—lest one awaken and pounce.

## training an army

Some rulers have just a couple units of troops to defend their realms, while others command huge offensive military machines. Most, however, fall somewhere in between. Even regents who would like larger armies often are limited by the cost of maintaining one.

A number of rulers, however, have stretched their military budgets by recruiting basic units and later improving them into unique forces through specialized training. These distinctive units generally are named to reflect their status: the Hogunmark Dragons, the Quintain Guardians of the Burrows, Binsada's Lions of Dusk, and so on.

Table 8: Military Statistics, in this chapter, indicates mustering costs and other information for basic Cerilian units. A regent may recruit any unit listed in the table, assuming the ruler meets all the requirements (law holdings, access to the right regions/races of Cerilia, etc.) for obtaining that unit. He may then attempt to improve the unit to make his troops better than those of his rivals.

## new domain action: improve unit

Improving a military unit is not an easy or inexpensive task. It cannot be done automatically, and does involve some risk. A regent could end up spending several months or even years training and re-training a unit, only to lose it in a minor skirmish.

To attempt to improve a unit, the regent expends one domain action. More than one unit can be improved at once

regent failed the success check, the unit did not improve itself. The regent may continue to garrison the unit (spending an additional 1 RP and 1 GB every month) for another month if he wishes, or he can return the troop to active duty.

If the unit remains in garrison for consecutive months, the regent may add a +1 modifier to his die roll for every month (after the first) the unit trains. As in the rules for training in new skills (see above), additional success rolls count as free actions until the unit improves.

As in all military training, however, there is risk. If the regent rolls a modified 1 (or less) during the success check, a training accident occurs and the unit disbands.

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## an example improved unit

The following example has been written in a role-playing context, with information about game mechanics given in *italics*.

Laela Flaertes, Duchess of Tuornen, is approached by her military commander, Braedonnal Tuare. He reports that Rhuobhe Manslayer has been quiet lately; he would like to use the lull as an opportunity to improve his soldiers' training. Tuare recommends that two units of pikemen receive instruction in archery (*acquire a new skill*) to allow greater flexibility in tactical planning.

The duchess consents. The two pikemen units are garrisoned in Haesrien (*at a cost of 2 GB, 2 RP, and one realm action*). To further show her support, the duchess allots 2 GB toward the training of each unit (*bringing the success number down to 18 each*).

After one month, Laela summons Tuare to report on the units' progress (*rolls for success*).

He informs her that one of the units has become proficient in archery (*rolled a 19, giving it a missile rating of "1"*) while the other hasn't mastered it yet (*rolled a 12*). As all remains quiet on the western front, Tuare recommends that each unit continue the archery training for another month.

The first unit can become still better archers (*improve an existing skill*), and the

second may yet become proficient (*acquire a new skill*).

The duchess agrees to maintain the training (*at a base cost of 2 GB and 2 RP to cover both units, and one domain action—improving an existing skill is a separate action from acquiring a new skill. The first unit continues on as a free action*). She also contributes an additional 2 GB per unit to the cause. (*This brings the success number down to 8 for the first unit and 17 for the second.*)

After another month, the duchess receives a progress report (*rolls for success*). Unfortunately, neither unit has improved (*rolled a 4 and 7*). The duchess instructs Commander Tuare to return the second unit to regular duty (*take the unit out of garrison*). The first unit, however, shows enough promise that she decides to continue its training for another month. (*She pays the base cost of 1 GB and 1 RP. Because the unit is attempting the same action as last month, this is now a free action.*) She does not, however, contribute any more financing (or RP) to the effort (*making the success number a 9*).

At the end of the month, Commander Tuare reports that the unit improved its archery skills (*rolled a 14, bringing its missile rating to "2"*). Pleased with the troops' success, the duchess names the unit Tuornen's Terrors.

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## limits on improvement

As a general guideline, no unit may increase any single skill by more than *threeranks*. So, no matter how much that Khinasi archer unit trains, it will never have a melee rating of more than 4. The Dungeon Master may choose to waive this restriction under exceptional circumstances. (For example, an extremely renowned unit with a long fighting history might be allowed to reenter training after a long period of active service again.)

Units that already have excellent (4+) ratings may not be able to improve using these rules, or the DM may choose to make such improvement more time-consuming and more costly than for lesser units. Those Khinasi archers, for example, have a missile rating of 5: one of the best missile ratings of any human unit on Cerilia. The DM may decide that they just can't get any better without some drastic change occurring somewhere else in the game. He could force the regent who wishes to improve the Khinasi archers to perform other domain actions (research, progress, etc.) that *might* allow them to train beyond their current capabilities. Or the DM might

through a realm action. For information about this option, see “Improving Units as a Realm Action,” below.

The regent must designate which unit(s) will undergo special training. Note that neither levies nor irregulars may be improved (they are not “standard” units and do not normally benefit from training). The unit is garrisoned (set aside) and is not available for normal army activity during its training period. It must stay within a particular province and may engage in battle only if another army attacks the province.

The regent must decide how he will improve the unit. He may attempt to improve one of the unit’s battle characteristics: move, melee, defend, missile, or charge. (Morale may increase as a consequence of other improvements; see “Named and Legendary Units,” below.) The difficulty and cost of the improvement depends on the unit’s existing rating.

## training in new skills

A regent may choose to teach and supply a unit in methods that members of the unit would not normally learn. For example, Anuirean infantry units normally have no missile rating. A regent may decide to instruct one of his units in archery, hoping that the troops can combine their infantry tactics with a surprise missile attack.

The base cost to instruct a unit in a brand new ability is 1 Gold Bar and 1 Regency Point. The success number, however, is 20+. Trying to teach an entire military unit a completely new method of fighting (without losing any of their previous training) can be extremely difficult. The regent may spend either Regency Points or Gold Bars to increase the die roll (1 point per RP or GB spent). At the end of the month of training, the regent rolls 1d20 to see whether the training has succeeded in improving the unit.

If he rolls a modified 20 or higher, the unit gains the new ability (the player can create a new War Card using the blank ones in this chapter, or simply write on an existing card). If, however, the modified die roll was a 1 (after adding in any extra Regency Points or Gold Bars spent to increase the unit’s chances of improving), some terrible mishap occurred during training and the unit must be disbanded. This event can occur only if the regent spends no additional gold or regency to improve the die roll.

Should the regent’s success check fail (but without disbanding the unit), the regent can decide to continue garrisoning the unit for further training. The unit must remain in the current province and may not engage in any military ac-

tivity (unless attacked). The regent must continue to pay 1 GB and 1 RP per month to maintain the garrison and the training (in addition to whatever he pays the troops themselves).

For each additional month the unit remains garrisoned, the success number *drops* by one. So, after two months in garrison, a unit’s success number would be 19; while after 10 months in garrison, it would be 11. The regent must make a die roll every month to see if the unit improves or disbands (and he may spend more Regency Points or Gold Bars to increase his chances); if he fails, he can continue to support the garrison.

Note that once the regent expends the initial domain action to garrison and train the unit for the first month, additional attempts count as free actions. If the regent succeeds the improvement attempt and wants to *further* improve the same unit, or if he wants to improve an additional unit, he must expend another domain action to initiate a new series of attempts.

## improving existing ratings

A regent can improve a unit’s existing abilities more easily than training a unit in a brand-new skill. Khinasi archers, for example, already know how to fight in melee combat; they just can’t do it very well.

To train a unit in an existing battle skill, the regent must garrison that unit (as described above) and set it aside for training. The regent then pays 1 GB and 1 RP (to set up the garrison and pay for training), in addition to whatever maintenance costs he normally pays for the unit.

The base success number the regent needs to roll at the end of the month of training is 10+ on 1d20. For every point the unit already has in the battle skill, the success number increases by 2 points. So, when improving a unit of Khinasi archers from a melee rating of 1 to 2, the regent must roll a 12 or higher. The regent may spend additional Regency Points and Gold Bars to increase his chances (each RP or GB gives the regent a +1 bonus to the die roll).

If the regent’s die roll meets or exceeds the success number, the unit’s score improves. He can then record the new score on the War Card (or create a new War Card) and return the unit to active duty. If, however, the

require the regent to enhance the unit's already exceptional abilities with permanent magic or expensive gear. While arming an entire unit of Khinasi archers with bows +1 would certainly improve its missile rating, actually producing or acquiring that many magical weapons should be prohibitively expensive, if not impossible.

Improving a unit's move rating by more than one step should be almost impossible—improving an unmounted unit's move beyond two ratings should require supplying the unit with mounts and training in their use. This can often (DM's option) reduce one of its other skills temporarily, until the troop actually survives battle conditions with their new mounts.

A related issue involves the charge rating. Currently, only one “normal” unmounted, humanoid unit on Cerilia has a charge rating—the Vos bersrk. Because of their inhuman ferocity and terrifying combat abilities, they can actually charge on foot. It should be nearly impossible for another unmounted unit to attain the ability to charge effectively in War Card combat.

## improving units as a realm action

A regent can choose to improve multiple units at once through performing “improve unit” as a realm action. He may establish one garrison for every three levels of a province, and train one unit per garrison. Thus, a regent who wanted to improve two units could garrison them both in a province (5) or garrison one unit apiece in two lower-level provinces. Each garrisoned unit requires its own base cost of 1 RP and 1 GB. The only limitations on how many units can be garrisoned at any one time are the regent's own resources.

For each unit, the regent must attempt separate success rolls and make separate expenditures of Regency Points and/or Gold Bars to modify the success number. If some units improve while others don't, he may continue to garrison the unsuccessful units to make further success attempts. As with the domain action, any unit that rolls a modified 1 during a success check is disbanded.

## named and renowned units

When a military unit gains notoriety through performance on the battlefield or because of the special training it receives, it may earn a distinctive name. The “Blackgate Stormlords” of Danigau and the “Imperial Legion” of Anuire are two such renowned units.

A regent may name his units anything he wants, but once he starts spending time and money improving them—and sees that investment pay off in stunning defeats of opposing forces—the names begin to circulate across the land. This increased reputation has several effects, most of them positive. A Dungeon Master might rule that a band of raiders, upon hearing that the Count of Danigau's “Daniguards” have been dispatched to deal with them, retreats—even though a unit of Daniguards isn't really that much more effective (on paper) than a standard unit of Brecht elite infantry.

This respect must be earned on the battlefield, however. When a named unit survives a battle, the regent controlling the unit should roll a twenty-sided die. On a roll of 20, the unit gains an additional morale symbol if it can (a unit may have up to three morale symbols—one of each) and the DM should consider this a “renowned” unit. The presence of the unit on the battlefield or even in a province may affect the outcome of certain random events that occur during domain turns, or perhaps even the outcome of a battle. These options, however, are left completely up to the Dungeon Master.

If a named unit does not achieve notoriety after surviving its first battle, the difficulty of obtaining “renowned” status decreases by one after every subsequent battle. (The more fighting the unit does, the more people hear about it, and the more stories circulate.) So, if the new “Roesone Legion” survives three battles, the regent needs to roll an 18+ for it to gain renowned status.

Note that the DM can choose to award or take away renowned status at will. If a unit—even an unnamed one—manages some sort of heroic defense or attack (say, a single unit of infantry drives off three units of attacking knights and survives), the DM may promote it to renowned status immediately, without a die roll. On the other hand, if a named unit attempts to achieve renowned status by accompanying many other units into completely one-sided battles that they can't possibly lose, the unit may achieve the opposite of notoriety—scorn and derision. This may

affect the unit's morale in a negative fashion, or may even reduce one or more of its battlefield statistics. Again, this option is left completely up to the DM.

## creating new war cards

Once a unit has been improved or named, players will need a new War Card to represent it during battles. They may, if they choose, write any changes on existing War Cards. Or they can make use of the blank War Cards provided in this chapter. The page can be photocopied onto paper or cardstock.

After copying the page, the player should select a blank War Card with the appropriate number of hits (using a similar existing unit as a model) and write in the unit's name and statistics. Any special advantages, weaknesses, etc. should also be noted on the card. In the space provided, the player should draw in one (or more, where appropriate) of the three morale symbols for use during battles.

## paying the price of success

Naturally, better units deserve better equipment and more pay. However, some elite troops see their fame and service as sufficient reward. The DM has to balance these factors when deciding whether or not to increase the maintenance cost of trained, exceptional units.

One should consider a few key elements when deciding the maintenance costs of a unit. If a unit learned a new ability (supplying normal infantry units with missile capability, for example), it will probably have to be maintained at a higher cost. Not only does the infantry unit have to take care of its armor and melee weapons, but now its new missile weapons have to be considered.

In general, increasing a unit's existing capabilities should signify a raise in maintenance costs—but not an unreasonable one. If a unit gains a brand new ability, the DM should raise the cost of its maintenance by 1 GB every domain turn. If a unit increases any combination of existing abilities by three points, the maintenance cost of that unit should be increased by another Gold Bar every domain turn. Turning a

walking unit into a riding one will automatically increase the maintenance cost of that troop by at least one (probably two) Gold Bars.

The DM, however, may wish to defer some of these costs. Units with three morale icons, for example, take great pride in serving their leaders and fighting for their realms. When a renowned unit gains its third morale icon, the DM may wish to decrease the cost of its maintenance. However, this decrease should never push the renowned unit's seasonal pay down below that of a similar, unrenowned unit. As a general guideline, renowned units should be the highest-paid units in the land, according to type (the Danigaur of Danigau, for example, is probably the highest-paid infantry unit in the realm, but it does not expect to be paid as much as a cavalry unit, since the latter unit has to maintain its mounts).

Good role-playing may offset costs as well. If, for example, a paladin regent of Haelyn decrees (using a free action) that all the soldiers in his well-trained, battle-tested unit of knights—the Thundering Hooves of Haelyn—should be considered Knights of the Realm and will be the only military unit in the army to wear the paladin's own coat of arms, then that unit may choose to perform for him at a reduced cost, regardless of what the regent is paying his other knights. If the paladin maintains high loyalty in his realm and continues to pay special attention to the Thundering Hooves unit, then the DM may continue deferring the higher costs of trained and renowned units.

Many of the named units included in the BIRTHRIGHT campaign setting and the campaign expansions have been dealt with this way. The Blackgate Stormlords of Danigau have all been granted orders of minor nobility by the Count of Danigau, while the Serpent Guard (special infantry units recruited and trained by the Serpent's hand-picked captains) gains a larger share of all booty wrested from enemies.

# table 8: military statistics

Unit Type	Move	Melee	Defense	Morale*	Charge	Missile	Muster (Law)	Maint.
<b>ANUIREANS</b>								
Archers	2	2	2	2	—	4	2 (2)	1
Artillerists	1	1	1	2	—	5	4 (5)	2
Cavalry	3	3	3	2	5	1	4 (3)	2
Infantry	1	3	3	2	—	—	2 (1)	1
Infantry, Elite	1	4	4	3	—	—	4 (3)	2
Irregulars	2	3	2	2	—	2	1 (1)	1
Knights	2	4	4	3	6	—	6 (4)	2
Levies	1	2	1	1	—	—	0 (1)	1
Pikemen	1	3	3	2	—	—	2 (2)	1
Scouts	3	2	2	2	—	3	2 (0)	1
<b>BRECHTS</b>								
Archers	2	2	1	2	—	4	2 (2)	1
Artillerists	1	1	2	2	—	5	4 (5)	2
Cavalry	2	3	2	2	4	1	4 (3)	2
Infantry	1	3	3	2	—	—	2 (1)	1
Infantry, Elite	2	4	3	3	—	—	4 (1)	2
Irregulars	2	2	2	2	—	3	1 (1)	1
Knights	3	4	4	3	6	—	5 (3)	2
Levies	2	2	1	1	—	1	0 (1)	1
Marines	2	5	5	3	—	—	4 (4)	2
Scouts	3	2	2	2	—	3	2 (0)	1
<b>DWARVES</b>								
Guards	1	3	5	3	—	—	4 (4)	2
Crossbows	1	2	4	2	—	4	4 (4)	2
<b>ELVES</b>								
Archers	2	2	2	3	—	5	4 (3)	1
Cavalry	4	3	3	3	5	4	8 (4)	2
<b>GNOLLS</b>								
Infantry	2	4	4	1	—	2	2 (—)	1
Marauders	2	3	3	1	—	2	3 (—)	1
<b>GOBLINS</b>								
Archers	1	1	2	1	—	3	2 (2)	1
Infantry	1	2	2	1	—	1	1 (2)	1
Cavalry	2	3	3	2	1	4	4 (3)	2
<b>KHINASI</b>								
Archers	2	2	1	2	—	4	2 (3)	1
Artillerists	1	1	1	2	—	5	6 (5)	2
Infantry	1	3	3	2	—	1	3 (4)	1
Levies	1	2	1	1	—	—	1 (4)	—
Lt. Cavalry	4	2	2	2	3	3	3 (3)	2
Md. Cavalry	3	4	3	3	5	2	4 (4)	2
Skirmishers	3	2	1	1	—	2	2 (1)	1
Spearmen	2	3	3	2	—	—	2 (3)	1

Unit Type	Move	Melee	Defense	Morale*	Charge	Missile	Muster (Law)	Maint.
<b>MERCENARIES</b>								
Cavalry	3	3	3	1	5	1	6 (—)	2
Infantry	1	3	3	1	—	—	4 (—)	2
Irregulars	2	3	2	1	—	2	3 (—)	1
Reavers	1	3	3	1	—	—	4 (—)	2
<b>OROGS</b>								
Infantry	1	3	3	2	—	—	4 (—)	2
Pikes	1	3	3	2	—	—	4 (—)	2
<b>RJURIK</b>								
Archers	2	2	2	2	—	4	2 (2)	1
Battle Ragers	1	5	2	3	—	—	? (?)	?
Cavalry	3	3	3	2	5	1	4 (3)	2
Housecarls	1	4	4	3	—	—	? (?)	?
Infantry	1	3	3	2	—	—	2 (1)	1
Irregulars	2	2	2	2	—	2	1 (1)	1
Mariners	2	3	3	2	—	1	? (?)	?
Scouts	3	1	2	2	—	4	2 (0)	1
Shapeshifters	2	5	3	3	—	—	? (?)	?
Tribesmen	1	4	3	2	—	2	? (?)	?
<b>VOS</b>								
Archers	2	2	2	2	—	4	2 (1)	1
Artillerists	1	2	1	2	—	4	4 (3)	2
Berserkers	2	5	2	3	2	—	2 (2)	2
Cavalry	3	3	3	2	5	1	4 (2)	2
Infantry	1	3	3	2	—	—	2 (0)	1
Infantry, Elite	1	5	4	3	—	—	4 (1)	2
Irregulars	2	4	2	2	—	1	1 (0)	1
Knights	2	4	4	3	6	—	6 (3)	2
Levies	1	2	2	2	—	—	0 (0)	1
Pikemen	1	3	3	2	—	—	2 (1)	1
Scouts	3	2	2	2	—	3	2 (0)	1
Varsk Riders	2	5	4	3	5	—	5 (2)	2

**Morale** is represented on the War Cards by 1, 2, or 3 symbols.  
This category lists the number of morale symbols each unit has.

**Law** indicates the required law holding level a regent must control within the province in order to muster a particular unit.

**Muster and Maintenance** costs are given in Gold Bars per domain turn.

Move:	Melee:
Defense:	Charge:
Morale:	Missile:
2 Hits	3 Hits
Melee:	Melee:
Charge:	Charge:
Missile:	Missile:
1 Hit	
Melee:	
Charge:	
Missile:	

Move:	Melee:
Defense:	Charge:
Morale:	Missile:
	
2 Hits	
Melee:	Missile:
Charge:	
Missile:	
<b>1 Hit</b>	
Melee:	Missile:
Charge:	
Missile:	

Move:	_____	Melee:	_____
Defense:	_____	Charge:	_____
Morale:	_____	Missile:	_____
			
1 Hit	Melee:	Charge:	Missile:
_____	_____	_____	_____

Move:	Melee:
Defense:	Charge:
Morale:	Missile:
	
2 Hits	1 Hit
Melee:	Melee:
Charge:	Charge:
Missile:	Missile:

Move:	<input type="text"/>	Melee:	<input type="text"/>
Defense:	<input type="text"/>	Charge:	<input type="text"/>
Morale:	<input type="text"/>	Missile:	<input type="text"/>



Melee:	<input type="text"/>
Charge:	<input type="text"/>
Missile:	<input type="text"/>

Move:	Melee:
Defense:	Charge:
Morale:	Missile:
2 Hits	Missile:
Melee:	Charge:
Charge:	Melee:
Missile:	1 Hit
	

Move:	Melee:
Defense:	Charge:
Morale:	Missile:
	
_____ _____ _____	Missile: Charge: Melee: <b>1 Hit</b>

# regent kits

---

*Shaene, Prince of Diamond Falls, grew up knowing he was destined to rule. His parents knew it before he was born. His younger siblings—princes and princesses in their own right—realized it. His tutors, his trainers, and his royal playmates all knew it from the moment they were introduced to Shaene.*

*Every lesson he learned as a child groomed him for rule. His parents trained him in the subtleties of courtliness and kingship so that they became first-nature to him. The young prince looked at the world through a leader's eyes—ready to choose and act in accordance with his responsibilities and upbringing.*

*When it came time for the Prince of Diamond Falls to make a name for himself in the world, he had to choose his own way. He could adopt the role of a warrior-king, a chevalier extraordinaire, or one of many royal "professions." Each would present him with new challenges and new ways of looking at agency. Whichever he chose, he knew the most important*

*Do not fail.*

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**R**ealm regents can be of any character class and of any race. They can learn the way of the sword as warriors, stand with their gods as priests, manipulate true magic as wizards, or manipulate people as rogues. But whether they title themselves kings or guildmasters, high priests or wizard regents, the class they choose indicates their natures and defines their abilities; their race in many respects influences their philosophies of rulership.

There exist, however, certain types of rulers common to Cerilia. Perhaps would-be kings observe their peers and adopt the attitudes and practices of those rulers they consider successful. Or perhaps the land itself responds favorably to particular kinds of regents. Regardless, many of the continent's realm regents learn certain skills and effect certain attitudes. After several centuries of refinement and tempering by the volcano of political, military, and social upheaval that is Cerilia, these methods and traditions can be categorized.

This is not to say that regents who fall outside these categories cannot rule successfully—quite the opposite. Most subjects will respond well to a

noble and just lord, no matter what his background. But for players interested in creating a certain type of regent character, the "regent kits" offered in this chapter can provide good models.

## regent character kits

This section presents the regent kits in a standard format. The **name** of the kit appears first, followed by a brief **description** of the kit. The **role** of characters selecting this kit comes next.

Possible **secondary skills** for these characters adopting each kit follow. While the Dungeon Master determines whether or not the secondary skills rules are used in his campaign, this listing offers an accurate view of what sorts of knowledge characters of that kit should possess.

The **weapon** and **nonweapon proficiencies** also indicate a character's likely background, education, and areas of expertise. If the Dungeon Master chooses to use the proficiencies rules in his campaign, characters using these kits must select the **required proficiencies** at the earliest possible time opportunity. Characters are not compelled to select **recommended proficiencies** at any time, but they are strongly encouraged.

The Dungeon Master also must decide how much **equipment** the player characters begin adventuring with, though regents should receive quite a bit of leeway (they have the resources of a realm at their disposal, after all). The recommendations listed here suggest adventuring equipment and possible magical items characters of each kit might possess at the start of the game.

Each kit has its own **special benefits** and **hindrances**. Some are oriented to role-playing and must be monitored carefully by the Dungeon Master and players. Others provide rules advantages to adventuring situations, domain actions, or War Moves.

**Wealth options** hardly figure into the building of most regent characters, but the kits offer some basic guidelines. No regent begins the game as a pauper (unless the Dungeon Master and the player decide on special circumstances), but not everything a player character may want is available to him—at first.

In some cases, regent kits may be adopted only by characters of particular **races** or **character classes**. The Dungeon Master must approve any kit for use by any race or class, but some pairings just fit better than others.

Finally, **notable** members of each kit serve as sample existing regents who fit the profile described. While possessing a kit seldom affects game play for NPC regents, the examples can give players some idea of what their characters might turn out like should they choose particular regent kits.

## king errant

Because the regents of Cerilia strive for personal greatness as well as greatness for their realms, adventuring realm regents flourish within the continent. When the only hero of the land may be its lord, the king errant becomes vitally important.

The king errant trains himself not only for a life of leadership and lordship, but for the trials of adventuring. He surrounds himself with other adventurers, valuing their skills and treating them as near-equals on the trail. Less interested in the bloodline or lineage of his adventuring companions than whether they can come through for him in a pinch, the king errant concerns himself with their abilities.

These regents make great names for themselves by being heroes to their people. Instead of assigning daunting tasks to their armies, or calling out for other adventurers to accomplish dangerous feats, they gain the glory and experience themselves. More than any other, the adventuring regent learns to trust in his own arms and wits, and less in the counsel of cautious advisers.

**Role:** Only a select few Cerilian nobles prove themselves capable adventurers. While most regents have the inner spark that could make them great heroes, many suppress that spark for their own well-being or for the good of their realms.

The king errant fans that spark, building it into a blaze that can be seen across the land.

The king errant pursues adventure. He deals with threats to his realm personally, using his own strength and his own wits instead of the abilities of others. The

king errant desires nothing more than a fair chance at success on any venture—though he remains undaunted regardless of the odds he faces.

**Secondary skills:** The king errant learns skills that should

help him on the adventuring trail. He might be a Hunter, or he could learn the skills of an Armorer, Bowyer/Fletcher, or Forester. Other secondary skills might be appropriate as well, depending upon his class or other background details.

**Weapon proficiencies:** Any melee or missile weapons suitable for the PC's character class are acceptable for a king errant. Because he has access to information and training not available to commoners, the king errant might even know how to use weapons not native to his home region.

**Nonweapon proficiencies:** *Required*—Leadership, Survival. *Recommended*—Diplomacy, Endurance, History (local and ancient), Languages (local and nonlocal), Reading/Writing, Tracking.

**Equipment:** The king errant may begin adventuring with virtually any sort of nonmagical equipment. He might have armor from other regions, and weapons too. The king errant generally tries to have the best horses and pack animals available—though his horse might not be a war horse, depending on his style of adventuring.

A king errant usually overpacks. In most cases, the character prepares for any contingency by bringing along a pack animal or two to carry food, extra equipment, and a few empty sacks or chests for treasure acquired along the way.

The king errant who starts out adventuring with a magical item might have a weapon or armor, but would most likely carry an heirloom more directly in accordance with his character class. He knows he will, eventually, encounter more magic, so he doesn't always have a permanent magical item with him—potions and scrolls make handy additions to his mundane arsenal.

**Special benefits:** Because of his penchant for acquiring glory and renown across the land, the king errant may add one to the number of henchmen (or lieutenants) he may acquire for every five levels of experience he achieves. In addition, the king errant can always add one to the maximum character level of his henchmen (or lieutenants) in relation to his bloodline (see the lieutenant domain action in the *Rulebook* for details).

When a king errant successfully completes an adventure set primarily within the bounds of his own realm, he gains a number of Regency Points based on the difficulty of the adventure. Most adventures net him 1d4+1 RP for successful completions. A particularly difficult adventure gains the king errant 2d4 RP, and an adventure in which the difficulty “goes against all odds” nets him 3d4 RP. The people of the realm appreciate the heroism and romance surrounding the king errant.

**Special hindrances:** The king errant cannot pass up an adventuring opportunity for any but

the most pressing reasons. If a random event occurs that could be handled by an adventure (the DM must agree) and the king errant chooses to delegate the mission to an underling (either as an actual adventure or to be resolved per normal random events), the king errant immediately loses 2d4 RP.

When random events occur that do not require adventures but could be solved by the king errant's personal attention, he must also take notice. If he fails to respond personally to the event, he loses 1d6 RP.

Finally, if the king errant concludes an unsuccessful adventure within his realm (and survives) he loses the faith of the populace and can lose between 1d4 and 3d4 RP. The Dungeon Master should decide how embarrassing the failure is.

**Wealth options:** The king errant begins the game with a complete tack and harness, a good horse (or its equivalent), a pack animal and equipment, and (if the Dungeon Master permits) one magical item. Of course, the king errant also has the backing of an entire realm's treasury, but all regents have that.

**Races:** Humans of all types may become king errants. Nonhumans tend to shy away from this choice of kit, with the possible exception of halflings and half-elves. Humanoids almost never become king errants.

**Character classes:** King errants come from all character classes. While warriors tend to become the most famous of the king errants, other classes produce fine examples of these adventurers.

**Notable king errants:** Darold Wohlkern of Sera's Perfekt Symmetry (in Wierech) has become a famous adventuring priest, though he is not a realm regent himself. The barony of Roesone has produced more than a few king errants, including the present-day ruler, Marlae Roesone. Vladimir Nikailov, the Vos baron of Kozlovnyy, has had to become a king errant to lead his people away from the worship of evil gods.

## merchant prince

In a land as rich as Cerilia, one should expect the development of economics-minded realm regents. The merchant prince learns the value of gold and barter at the trading centers of the world, parlaying this knowledge into wealth for himself, his nobles, and his people.

While other realm regents concern themselves with the acquisition of direct power and the strengthening of their borders, the merchant prince tries to dissolve those borders, at least as far as financial transactions are concerned. The merchant prince has an eye for profit and a de-

sire for free trade. Quite often, merchant princes turn their positions of authority into positions of proxy—acting on behalf of their realm's merchant class, they pass laws and engage in treaties solely for the purpose of promoting trade.

But the merchant prince does not "sell out" his realm. He looks to forging an empire of his own out of trade routes, codependence, and enlightened self-interest. He needs others to need him more. He uses his influence to create and harness new markets—and with the resources of a realm at his disposal, he can do this quite successfully.

**Role:** While Cerilia's borders still change from time to time, and certain realms threaten to obliterate others with a well-timed invasion, the merchant prince thrives on negotiation and trade. While he may not himself profit financially from his carefully-constructed agreements and deals, the merchant prince gains fame and power through his reputation at the bargaining table.

Some might express concern that merchant princes reflect the changing nature of Cerilia—from a land of noble families and concrete borders to a world of merchants and silver-tongued traders. These romantics overlook the fact that the merchant prince strengthens his realm more in a year with "silver-tongued talk" than his ancestors did in their lifetimes with a sword.

The merchant prince sometimes grows out of a cultural tradition, but usually sprouts up as an aberration in a realm still recovering from war. After a long line of despots or nobles who only know the lessons they learned at a sword's point, the merchant prince can turn a blasted and battle-shocked realm into a profitable, habitable place once again.

**Secondary skills:** The merchant prince usually has a passing knowledge of the trades native to his realm, but focuses on being a Trader/Barterer.

**Weapon proficiencies:** Merchant princes usually learn the use of one or two weapons native to their realms.

**Nonweapon proficiencies:** *Required*—One occupational proficiency concerning the realm's trade (Fishing, Leatherworking, Stonemasonry, etc.), Administration, Appraising, Language (local), Reading/Writing. *Recommended*—More occupational proficiencies, more languages, Diplomacy, Etiquette, Intrigue, Riding (land) or Seamanship.

**Equipment:**

Merchant princes usually carry “samples” of their realm’s products with them whenever traveling. They tend toward light armor and unimposing weapons, though they may have bodyguards with heavy armaments if they feel the precaution necessary. Merchant princes begin adventuring with pack animals or a small ship sufficient to carry at least 2 Gold Bars’ worth of goods to neighboring trade centers.

When merchant princes begin the game with magical items, they usually have either a few less-powerful items (like potions or scrolls), or one powerful nonweapon item.

**Special benefits:** Even if a merchant prince does not have a guild holding, he can set up a permanent trade route with a guild or another holding belonging to a merchant prince. The action can be performed only as a domain action, but in the same manner as a guild regent performs the trade route action (see the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook*). The merchant prince may not have more than one such trade route for every three levels of experience (round up) he has obtained.

In addition, merchant princes gain advantages in negotiation due to their notoriety. When negotiating on the behalf of a guild regent to establish a trade route, the merchant prince can add a modifier to the latter’s chance of successfully completing the trade route action. The merchant prince may choose to add one-tenth the total number of province levels he rules to influence the guild regent’s success roll. If both ends of the trade route lie within provinces ruled by the merchant prince, he can double this modifier.

**Special hindrances:** Because of the generally nonviolent demeanor of the merchant prince, a character starting with this kit must transfer one of his initial weapon proficiency slots into a non-weapon proficiency slot.

**Wealth options:** A merchant prince begins with the financial backing of a realm behind him, as do all regents. He seldom begins adventuring with war horse and a suit of impressive armor (though he may). Usually, however, he has a magical item and at least 1

GB of personal treasure (acquired during the practice of his trade before he became regent).

**Races:** Of the humans, the Brechts and the Khinasi produce the most merchant princes.

Rjurik merchant princes are less common. Anuireans tend to think such activi-

ties are beneath the notice of the nobility, and the Vos trade only seldomly with each other, and even less often with others.

Dwarves make passable merchant princes, though their kings usually assign vassals or lieutenants to such actions. Halflings prefer to be merchant princes (out of all the kits). The elves on Cerilia seldom engage directly in trade with anyone.

Of the humanoids, only the goblins ever produce any merchant princes. Usually, these untrustworthy individuals rise far in the ranks of goblinkind before a more militant faction cuts them down entirely.

**Character classes:** Naturally, most merchant princes tend to be rogues or guilders (see *Havens of the Great Bay*). Warriors and wizards make up the bulk of the minority. Priest regents seldom become merchant princes—though priests of Sera and Eloéle have been known to rule realms and engage in strong trade actions.

**Notable merchant princes:** The Count of Müden, Richard Talbehr, could be one of the most famous realm regents and merchant princes. The emir of Sendoure, Beysim el-Duatim, is a marginally successful merchant prince. Halskapa, in the Rjurik Highlands, has had its share of merchant princes as well.

## warrior-king

The warrior-king learns his trade on the battlefields and in the castles of Cerilia. He learns personal combat from the best trainers in the realm—perhaps in the region or even the world. He studies strategy from the words of generals and from ancient texts alike. He becomes a scholar of war and a doctor of strategy. The warrior-king cannot be called a brute or barbarian simply because he specializes in the logistics of armies locked in combat. He can be a defender or a destroyer, avenger or looter, imperial majesty or rebel dog. The warrior-king earns his reputation on the battlefield and history remembers him afterwards as winner or loser.

Warrior-kings can develop in any type of realm. The uneducated man might place them only among the most barbarous or warlike kingdoms, but that simply is not the case. A warrior-king learns his trade like a scholar studies his books. He trains, practices, and learns to project and improvise. More often than not, the warrior-king becomes what he is to defend civilization, not to destroy it.

Conquerors often begin as warrior-kings, however. Sometimes, a regent trained for war finds himself in an unusual era of peace. Perhaps his

neighbors finally learned the folly of continuous warfare, or perhaps the warrior-king's predecessors made his kingdom so strong it frightened the surrounding realms into peaceful coexistence. Sometimes, this state prods the warrior-king, who sees his life's training going to waste, toward forging an empire of his own.

Warrior-kings make excellent war-time regents and can be powerful and influential peace-time lords. They understand the chain of command and vassalage, and respect strength of many kinds. Best of all, true warrior-kings actually respect peace and understand that war should be a means to an end, not something to start frivolously. Unfortunately, few true warrior-kings exist today on Cerilia. Too often, these well-trained strategists ache to put their knowledge into play, only regretting it too late when all they and their neighbors have built falls into ruin.

**Role:** The role of the warrior-king in Cerilian society cannot be disputed. In many realms, only warrior-kings can hope to win and hold their thrones. War has always been a large part of Cerilia's past. Skilled and educated warriors gain respect from those who follow them.

In truth, the warrior-king most often symbolizes a defender and a vibrant leader to his people. The warrior-king leads from the front, putting his realm's welfare above that of all others. He uses his knowledge and strategy even in peacetime. The warrior-king realizes he cannot win every battle, so he tries to defend his resources with cunning and strength, minimizing any losses he is forced to take. He values strength in his people and ideally wants them to be able to defend themselves. No true warrior allows those under his command to suffer sickness, famine, or hurt without some plan for their betterment. A warrior-king feels the same way about his subjects. He leads them, defends them, and champions them in all cases—he looks to them for support and, if they cannot give it, he loses the war before he fights the battle.

**Secondary skills:** The warrior-king might learn the skills of an Armorer, Bowyer/Fletcher, Weaponsmith, or even Sailor, depending on his realm of origin.

**Weapon proficiencies:** *Required*—A melee weapon standard to his culture or race. *Recommended*—As many weapons as possible. Specializing in a weapon is also preferred.

**Nonweapon proficiencies:** *Required*—Siege-craft, Strategy. *Recommended*—Administration, History (local and/or ancient), Law, Leadership, Reading/Writing, Riding (land-based). Also recommended are cultural proficiencies (Brechts learn Sailing, Anuireans learn Heraldry, etc.).

**Equipment:** Warrior-kings begin with the advantages of all realm regents. As starting characters, they may gain a magical item, but it should almost always be a combat-oriented heirloom of some kind. A warrior-king should, at his first opportunity, acquire the best weapons and armor possible, as well as an able war horse, if appropriate. (Vos warrior-kings often ride varsk, while Brecht warrior-kings may simply focus on seamanship.) Any type of weapon or armor common to the warrior-king's race and culture should be available. Of course, the warrior-king can use only weapons and armor allowed to his class.

**Special benefits:** When adventuring, warrior-kings project an attitude of calm in the most desperate situations. Their followers, henchmen, and hirelings gain a one-level bonus to their morale, as long as the warrior-king is in command and relatively in control of the situation.

If NPC followers, henchmen, or hirelings of a warrior-regent become subject to a magical fear spell or aura of some kind, they gain a +1 bonus to their saving throws as long as the warrior-king is present and succeeds at his own saving throw. Player characters, however, gain no bonus from the warrior-king in this instance, even if they serve him.

This morale boost translates to battlefield conditions as well. Whenever the warrior-king accompanies a unit onto the battlefield and that unit routs for any reason, the warrior-king can choose to rally his troops and ignore the rout result. If the unit routs twice in consecutive turns, however, the warrior-king cannot affect the second instance and the unit flees.

When a warrior-king uses the muster troops domain action, he can take advantage in two ways of his notoriety and keen eye for soldiery. First, the warrior-king may muster one unit of militia from any province he controls, without the province suffering the level reduction. The warrior-king simply figures out a logistical way to make the necessary men and women available without handicapping the work-force.

Secondly, whenever a warrior-king musters troops, he can roll 1d20 and add a +1 bonus to the roll for every three levels of ability (round down) he has obtained. If the modified die result is 20+, he does not have to pay that unit its mustering cost. The men and women forming the unit have come forth to serve the warrior-king because of his fame.

They bring with them their own armor and weapons, as well as food and other provisions for their first three months of action. After the first domain turn, of course, the warrior-king must pay their normal maintenance cost or disband them.

**Special hindrances:** If the warrior-king flees from a battle (either during an adventure or during a war move), his subordinates lose confidence. Henchmen, followers, and hirelings left behind lose the warrior-king morale bonus and then lose one *more* level of morale. During a War Move, units that witness the warrior-king's flight treat all hit results from then on as hit and rout results.

**Note:** This special hindrance does not come into play if the warrior-king isn't abandoning his troops. If he retreats with his subordinates, or if he simply moves off the battlefield because his troops have the day nearly won, the Dungeon Master may choose to not enforce this hindrance.

**Wealth options:** As with all regents, the warrior-king has the resources of a realm at his disposal. He often begins the game with a war horse and fine armor, and sometimes has a family heirloom—usually a magical weapon.

**Races:** Of the human races, Anuireans and Vos produce the most warrior-kings, followed by the Rjurik. Khinasi lands raise up the next highest number, and the Brechts produce the fewest.

Nonhuman warrior-kings don't appear very often. The elves tend to rely on more subtle sorts of leaders, while the halflings seldom follow their own leaders into war. Dwarves produce warrior-kings when necessary, often excelling on the field of battle.

The humanoid races actually produce only a few warrior-kings. They lack the scholarship of true strategists. Orcs tend to learn the most from the mistakes of their ancestors and, of the humanoids, produce the most notable warrior-kings. Often, these orc regents lead goblins and other humanoids into battle, surrounded by a small cadre of their own kind as bodyguards.

**Character classes:** Most warrior-kings train as fighters or paladins. A very few learn ranger skills. Priest warrior-kings are not unheard of, and even some wizard warrior-kings can develop (though they tend to be either dual- or multi-classed individuals, or they do not depend on their own knowledge of weaponry).

Rogues

become warrior-kings seldom, if ever.

**Notable war rior-kings:** The Count of Dani-gau, Erik Danig, may be one of the only wizard warrior-kings in existence. The Captain of Müden, Melisande Reaversbane, follows a more traditional background, as does Gavin Tael of Ghoere.

## additional rules

The DM and players should regard these regent kits as *optional*. Depending on the style of campaign, they might overstep some role-playing boundaries. The DM should feel free to eliminate or modify any kits or create others based on the needs of his own campaign and the interests of his players.

When a PC does choose a kit approved by the DM, he may not switch to a different kit during his adventuring lifetime. He may, however, choose to abandon the kit, and permanently lose any advantages (and hindrances) attached to the kit immediately. Or he might temporarily or permanently lose the benefits of the kit (but *not* the hindrances) involuntarily (by violating some aspect of the kit—knowingly or unknowingly—in a dramatic way).

For example, a king errant might refuse to go on several adventures because he sees them as too dangerous (or too much trouble). After he has been warned (probably by his henchmen or advisers) that his actions are taking a toll on his reputation, he'll begin losing the benefits of his kit. His extra henchmen resign, and he gains no RP bonuses for those adventures he does undertake successfully. He still, however, loses Regency Points for failing at adventure (or failing to resolve random events properly)—his people expect him to perform better.

The king errant, in this case, can escape these penalties in one of only two ways. He can take the easy path and publicly declare himself no longer a king errant. No shame should be attached to this decision—not every king adventures—but he loses all benefits and hindrances of the character kit immediately. He becomes a normal regent character.

The other way to solve the problem is harder to implement. The king errant must go on a quest, or a series of quests, to restore his good name. In general, he must perform a number of successful adventures primarily within his realm to atone for the regency he lost by being untrue to his kit. He gains no bonus Regency Points during this “attainment,” and may lose more Regency Points if he fails, but he should be able to regain his good standing eventually.

Other character kits should have similar penalties and methods of atonement. The Dungeon Master can customize these to fit the situation at hand.

# magical items and artifacts

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*The untamed magic of yesterday . . . remains.  
The schooled magic of today . . . grows.  
The unknown magic of tomorrow . . . becomes.*

—Author Unknown

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**B**efore the Flight from Shadow and the Battle of Mount Deismaar, elves and humans found ways to harness mebhaighl and priestly magic by binding it into swords, staves, and other items. In many cases, this magical binding proved to be the only way magic of the Old Time could be focused and controlled.

Spellcasters produced many powerful items. The Battle of Mount Deismaar and the destruction of the old gods drained or changed most of these artifacts, even as the power unleashed there changed magic itself. In the cataclysm's wake, humans with bloodlines derived from the old gods' power became capable of focusing and controlling the land's mebhaighl, just as the elves could.

Yet despite the addition of humans to the ranks of those able to cast wizardly magic, spellcasters remain rare in Cerilia. This fact makes the creation of magical items an uncommon and special thing. Though scrolls and magical potions are produced by many a court wizard and priestly adviser, more permanent magical devices are created much less frequently. And, because practitioners of true magic are few and far between, so are powerful magical items.

## regents and starting magical items

According to the *BIRTHRIGHT Rulebook* new PC regents have the option of beginning the game with a single magical item, or an excellent tack and harness that includes a trained warhorse and other adventuring accoutrements. Noting the rarity of magic items on Cerilia, many players will probably opt for the magical treasure.

Dungeon Masters should carefully look through the magic items presented in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* before assigning (or rolling for) a magical item for a starting player character. Some items of exceptional power exist on those charts, and many won't be appropriate for Cerilia at all, let alone in the hands of a beginning regent.

## selection guidelines

Most potions and scrolls presented in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* are appropriate. Even if a potion or scroll useable by a PC regent is extremely powerful, it can be used only once (perhaps two or three times, if the DM feels particularly generous). Naturally, the DM should disallow wishscrolls and the like.

The Dungeon Master should make sure that the item can be used, in some way, by the PC regent. While a warrior regent might inherit a *wand of fire* from his wizard father, the fact that he can't use it tends to discourage the player, if not the character. Still, if the DM can think of a creative for the *wand of fire* and reveal it to the player early in the campaign, he may wish to assign the item. For example, the wand might give the PC regent a reason for visiting a wizard regent (perhaps another PC) to exchange it for something more useful or to use as a negotiating tool.

The most important aspect of awarding a magical item to a beginning character, however, is the story behind the item.

Magical items on Cerilia, because they are so rare, tend to have storied pasts and in-

volved histories if they survive to come into the hands of a player character. The Dungeon Master should not simply give a starting PC regent a sword +1; he should create a history and a name for the weapon. DMs may want to involve their players in the creation of this legend or story to encourage role-playing.

**Example:** *The DM decides that Lord Cerwin, new regent of Roesone and former captain of the guard, inherits a sword +1 upon assuming the throne of the Anuirean realm. How did he inherit the magical weapon?*

*Since the DM wants Lord Cerwin's ascension to be relatively free of trouble, he decides that the former regent, Marlae Roesone, was wounded in battle. Rather than entrust the barony to one of her incompetent relatives, she chose Lord Cerwin to assume the throne and had her regency invested in him upon the spot. As a symbol of her trust and sincerity, she told Lord Cerwin a secret revealed only to the regents of Roesone: Defender, the long sword wielded by her great-grandfather the Black Baron, lies hidden within the castle at Proudglaise. She tells him the secret of finding it and advises him to bring the legendary blade out to show the other nobles of the realm that he is the chosen ruler of Roesone.*

The stories behind other magical items given to starting PC regents should have the same level of involvement as the above example. The item in question may not be as important to the PC's reign as *Defender* is to Lord Cerwin's peaceful ascension, but it could be. But critical to current events or not, the history should be significant.

The reaction of nonplayer characters to the magical item can reveal its historical significance. Continuing the above example, the nobles of Roesone (particularly Marlae's family) might not accept the captain of the guard as their new ruler. But when he emerges from a secret part of the castle with *Defender* they all kneel to him and believe Marlae chose him as her successor. This event might not convince the nobles of Lord Cerwin's abilities as a ruler, but it establishes his credentials.

Nonplayer characters should also react to the PC's treatment of the item (assuming NPCs know the item's significance). If

*Lord Cerwin chooses to go hunting and straps on *Defender* his advisers should gasp and mutter among themselves—*Defender* is a legendary sword, tied to the nobility of Roesone. Using it in such a pedestrian way*

makes Lord Cerwin look like he doesn't respect Roesone's traditions. Likewise, if, in the course of an adventure, Lord Cerwin finds a nameless sword +2 and discards *Defender* in favor of the additional +1 bonus, the insult would strike at the heart of Roesone's pride.

The DM needs to show his players the significance behind their starting magical items. The more powerful or distinctive the item, the more legendary and precious it should seem. Permanent magical items need histories like this, or they won't seem important. Charged items, like wands and staves, should have similar histories, though maybe not quite as distinctive. As mentioned above, scrolls and potions might not have more than a few lines of historical context—depending on the power of the item and the DM's decision.

## specific items and suggestions

Most Dungeon Masters won't have difficulty looking through the charts in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide* and determining which items are and aren't appropriate for beginning player characters. Players should also realize that, if their characters start with powerful magical items, they won't have much incentive to work for better items and go on dangerous adventures to attain them. Still, DMs can use the following lists as suggestions for items PC regents might (and might not) possess at the start of the game.

Unless otherwise noted, even items on the "prohibited" list may be found or gained over the course of adventuring.

**Note:** While cursed items may not be prohibited for starting PCs, they won't be appropriate as starting items in most situations, unless the DM has a particularly interesting scenario in mind for the first few adventures that will compensate the PC regent for his apparently "unlucky" heirloom.

## suggested items

These items are described in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

- Any potion or oil not forbidden to the PC's class or on the prohibited list below;
- Any scrolls not forbidden to the PC's class or on the prohibited list below;
- Any ring not forbidden to the PC's class or on the prohibited list below;
- Rod of security or splendor
- Staff or spear +1 or +2; staff of curing or slinging

(priests of Erik), *withering or the woodlands* (+2 only);

- All wands not forbidden to the PC's class or on the prohibited list below;
- All miscellaneous magical items with an XP value of 2,000 or less not forbidden to the PC's class;
- All armor with an XP value of 1,500 or less (maximum magical adjustment of +2, though the armor may have other characteristics) not prohibited to the PC's class;
- All weapons with an XP value of 1,500 or less (maximum magical adjustment of +2, though the weapon may have other characteristics) not forbidden to the PC's class.

## prohibited items

These items are described in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

- *Potion of dragon control*: Cerilian dragons cannot be controlled by standard *potions of dragon control*. If *potions of Cerilian dragon control* exist, they have not surfaced into known legend;
- *Scroll of protection from dragon breath*: Such items may exist, but Cerilian dragons all seem to have unique breath weapons, and the scroll would have to address a specific dragon's breath;
- *Ring of elemental command*: *mammal control, protection* (+3 or higher), *the ram shooting stars telekinesis* (100 lbs. or more), *wishes—multiple wishes—three or wizardry* (doubles better than 1st- and 2nd-level spells);
- All rods not found on the suggested list (above);
- All staves not found on the suggested list (above);
- *Wand of conjuration earth and stone or magic missiles*
- All miscellaneous magic items with an XP value greater than 2,000 (DM's option);
- All armor with an XP value greater than 1,500 or with an Armor Class adjustment greater than +2;
- All weapons with an XP value greater than 1,500 or with a combat bonus greater than +2.

## doses and charges

The recommended doses for potions and charges for rods, staves, and wands (listed in the *DMG*) may be appropriate for adventuring on Cerilia, but they might be excessive for "free" items given

to starting PCs.

In general, a PC regent could begin the game with a potion containing one to eight doses, depending on the power of the potion and the DM's choice. *Potions of healing* or other, similar potions of relatively containable power that may be used up quickly could have several doses, whereas more powerful potions, like *potions of invisibility* or *etheralness* may come to the character with only one or two doses left.

As for rods, staves, and wands, they should seldom contain more than *half* or (for wands) *one-quarter* the normal number of charges—perhaps fewer. Whoever had the item before the player character (perhaps several other regents bore the item) used many of the charges in great need—the PC regent should also use the item only in desperate circumstances, since by using it up he may destroy a family heirloom. Even though many of these items can be recharged, the process could prove difficult in a setting where true magic remains scarce.

## class prohibitions

As mentioned above, unless the Dungeon Master has a specific scenario in mind, he should avoid giving new PC regents magical items they cannot use. On the other hand, the DM may wish to grant items to PCs who are likely to be the only characters in the party who can use them. This consideration extends especially to priest and wizard PCs, to whom the DM may wish to give an edge in the area of magic. For this reason, powerful *wands of fire* have not been put on the prohibited list (since they can only be used by wizards and magicians), while the *wand of magic missiles* has, since it can be used by anyone.

This judgment call extends to miscellaneous magic as well. The "2,000 XP" cap exists as any easy check for the Dungeon Master. However, if a priest regent begins the game with a *phylactery of long years* (3,000 XP value) or even a large *necklace of prayer beads* (at 500 XP per special bead, that could be 3,000 XP) it probably won't unbalance the campaign.

## magical items from other sources

If the Dun-  
geon

Master wants to use magical items from other sources, such as the *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA*™ volumes or the *Tome of Magic* accessory, he must make a judgment call. If the item seems to fit into the story he wants to create for his BIRTHRIGHT campaign, then it is appropriate for the world. If the item doesn't seem too unbalancing or powerful, it can be given to a starting regent. In general, the DM should use the guidelines for suggested/prohibited magical items above. The overall XP value of magical item can provide guidance for most situations.

## correcting mistakes and improving the story

As starting magical items undoubtedly have strong legends and stories behind them, they also create stories as they go. If the Dungeon Master ever feels he may have given a PC regent an item too powerful, he should feel justified in using the item in a “special” story—say, a random domain event where the item is stolen and the hero must engage in several adventures to recover it or win restitution from the thief. The player should not feel cheated; his character gained the item “for free,” got some use out of it, and now it continues as part of the story of Cerilia. Perhaps the hero can win it back (maybe when he’s achieved a level of experience more appropriate in the DM’s eye), or can gain an item even more interesting and start a legend of his own.

## acquiring magical items without adventuring

If the Dungeon Master and the players engage in extended domain turn play (that is, they often play out several domain turns in a row, or make a point of playing out domain turns as often as engaging in normal role-playing), PC regents might acquire magical items without actually going on an adventure or quest.

The *Player’s Handbook* details special rules regarding magical items for several player character classes. For example, paladins can possess only very few magical items, and must donate the rest of their magical gains to a temple or other organization linked closely to their faiths. In a BIRTHRIGHT campaign, player characters have the opportunity to rule these organizations.

Of the five types of rulership (provinces and the four holding types), temple holdings have the most opportunity to garner magical treasure as part of their seasonal tithes. Paladins and priests must donate a certain portion of their adventuring gains to temples of their faiths, and that includes magical items.

All other regents may come into possession of magical items through taxation, tithe, or trade as well. A province ruler or a law regent might receive a magical item in lieu of Gold Bars when he taxes his domain. Guildmasters and wizard regents can receive magical items through trade.

Of course, a regent can’t just sit back in his court and hope to rake in magical item after magical item. Cerilia does not abound with enchanted objects. Still, they may come into a regent’s hands from a variety of sources.

If the DM wishes to use this method of distributing magical items, he can assign a simple percentage chance to determining whether or not a regent receives a magical item as part of a tax, tithe, or trade result.

Priests have a percentage chance of gaining a magical item from a single temple holding equal to the number of Gold Bars they would normally receive from that holding. The DM may choose to check for each individual holding a priest regent collects a tithe from during a domain turn, or he may check only those holdings he thinks most likely to contain magical items. When determining the percentage chance, he does not add the total amount of Gold Bars the priest regent receives during his tithe—he checks individual holdings separately. So, if a priest gains 2 GB from one temple holding, 3 GB from another, and 4 GB from a final holding, he does not have a 9% chance to gain a magical item this domain turn. He does, however, have three individual chances—at 2%, 3%, and 4%.

Nonpriest regents have half the chance (round up) of receiving magical items in lieu of Gold Bars from their individual holdings. Players can figure out the percentage chance in the same way as for priest regents.

Note, however, one important point: Should any regent receive a magical item in lieu of gold payment, it is “in lieu of” that payment. The regent does not collect the Gold Bars and the magical item. He

gains one or the other, or a combination.

The relative worth of a magical item, for purposes of taxation, should be about the same as its XP value. So, if a regent would normally gain 2 GB (4,000 gp) from a province, but the Dungeon Master determines that he receives a magical item, the DM can give the regent any combination he wants. The regent might, for example, receive a collection of potions with an XP value of 2,000 (or 2 GB), and another 2 GB in taxes. Or he might receive a *wand of fear* (worth 3,000 XP/3 GB) and 1 GB. Or he could collect a single magical item worth 4,000 XP.

## unforeseen benefits

When a regent receives a magical item instead of Gold Bars as tribute or tax, he gains some additional benefits. First of all, the regent does not have to accept a magical item unless he has a good idea of what it is and what it does. Certainly, a magical item such as a *sword +1* might have other properties (it could have a hidden curse or even be a *sword of sharpness*)—but the regent should at least be told of its +1 bonus.

The regent might also learn something of the item's lineage or at least its recent past. If a regent receives a collection of magical potions, for example, he might hear they come almost directly from an alchemist who just set up shop in his lands. In addition to gaining a collection of potions, the regent also learns of the existence of a powerful NPC in the region that he may want to contact in the future for advice or help—or keep an eye on.

The Dungeon Master can use a scenario such as this to his advantage. A regent might receive a magical weapon as tribute from one of his holdings, and learn that an adventurer turned it in as part of his payment for some service or other. The adventurer told a story about the item concerning a hidden treasure hoard and an evil monster. This could prompt the PC regent to gather his forces (the other player characters) and investigate on his own behalf.

The possibilities for jump-starting adventures this way are endless. The Dungeon Master shouldn't feel he is "giving away" magical items under these circumstances. Of course, he should avoid substituting very powerful magical items for taxes unless he has an extraordinary reason (for example, the *sword of sharpness* actually belongs to another regent and he's coming to look for it . . . with an army). In general, any item or collection of items the DM wouldn't mind giving to a starting regent can be received in this manner. Limited-use items (such as scrolls, potions,

or nearly-depleted rods, staves, and wands) work best for these situations.

## unforeseen drawbacks

Receiving a magical item in this manner actually can cause the regent some problems. The regent really ought to accept any magical items offered as taxes or tithes—with magical items so rare on Cerilia, he'd be a fool if he didn't. However, he can't pay his troops, build roads, or otherwise maintain his domain and court with a collection of potions or some musty old scrolls. If he ends up short of cash, he'll have to devise some other way of paying his bills or trim back expenses for a season. If he desires, he *can* use the finances domain action to sell his newly-acquired magical items for Gold Bars at his first opportunity.

When regents receive these sorts of treasures as taxes or tithe, they must remember that the items become the property of their domain's treasury or hoard. Of course, the regent does have the final say in what happens to the treasury, but he can cause bad feelings among his followers if he takes all the magical items acquired in this manner and uses them for only his own direct benefit.

If a PC regent begins to take all the best items for his own use, people should stop tithing them. In other words, the Dungeon Master should stop rolling for the chance of this to occur. If the PC regent, on the other hand, puts the items in his treasury "for an emergency" and conserves them or—better yet—gives them out to important lieutenants or allies (often NPCs) who have served the realm in special ways, the commonfolk and nobility should see his actions as just and wise. The people at the bottom like to see the regent give out rewards to those who serve loyally.

## encouraging magical tithes

A regent may, if he feels his chance of receiving a magical tithe too small for it to happen in his lifetime, encourage his subjects to substitute magical items for gold by granting tax breaks for them. Simply put, the regent decrees that those of his

subjects who pay their taxes with magical items get their taxes reduced. In order for this method to work, the regent must count the value of a magical item as *double* its normal worth. This act doubles the chance that a magical item will be tithed, but it can also leave the regent short of funds.

A magic-greedy regent, however, can run into problems. For every domain turn (after the first) this “tax break” is in effect, the regent risks decreasing the loyalty of his people (who see him as using his position to treasure hunt) and of falling prey to an elaborate fraud.

After the first domain turn that a tax break is in effect, there is a 20% chance that fraud occurs. For every domain turn thereafter, the chance increases by 5%. So, after three domain turns with the tax break in effect, a 30% chance of fraud exists.

This fraud can take many forms. The perpetrator might cast *Nystul's magical aura* on an item, or even *continual light*, to give it a “magical” appearance. The regent himself does not have to be fooled—only his subordinates and tax collectors, who probably have very little experience with magical items. Under normal circumstances, when the regent doesn't particularly care whether or not magical items come into his possession through taxation, his subordinates greet such offers with skepticism and take their time checking things out. However, when a tax break is in effect, they hope to impress their superiors by finding magical items and can be duped.

As far as the decrease in loyalty goes, the regent risks it only after he has started gaining magical items. If the regent receives magical items twice during a tax break period, a 10% chance exists that the loyalty level of the realm drops by one level *or* (in the case of regents who don't need to worry about loyalty levels) the regent gains 10% fewer Regency Points from his holdings.

The regent can reverse this loyalty drop if he rescinds the tax break for a while (at least two consecutive domain turns) or if he buys the magical items from the treasury with his own personal wealth. Most PC regents should have separate treasures of wealth and magical items gained from adventuring—the regent can simply pay the treasury the amount of gold the treasury would have received in lieu of the magical item(s). This action immediately wipes out any loyalty drop if it is accompanied by a decree proclaiming that the regent performed it.

# heirlooms and artifacts of today

Most powerful magical items in Cerilia have histories. Some of the most potent date from before the human tribes fled Aduria, bringing war and the Shadow to Cerilia. Dwarves toiled undermountain long before humans arrived, and even elves, possessing a form of true magic unknown in present-day Cerilia, created items that cannot be replicated today.

This chapter provides some sample magical items regents—particularly warrior regents—might encounter sometime during their adventuring careers. Most of the items listed here dwell largely in legend, and the stories behind the items often can be more powerful than the objects themselves.

In many cases, items of an earlier age inspired lesser copies, made for kings and adventurers centuries after the originals. If an item has copies, the properties of the copy are listed most prominently, since adventurers have a greater chance of encountering them than the original. (Note that in some descriptions, such as the *Sword of the Silent Watch* capital letters are used to differentiate between the original items and its copies.)

Artifacts and legendary items have a great place in Cerilian lore and adventuring. Even if an item listed here no longer exists within the bounds of a particular BIRTHRIGHT campaign, it does exist in the imaginations of someone in the world. It might inspire adventures, more copies, or other exciting possibilities.

## Armor

Considering the devastation caused by the Battle of Mount Deismaar and the weapons used there, Cerilian's leaders and heroes have always been in need of powerful armor and other protective gear. Realm regents—at least in the early years after the battle—had access to exceptional protections.

## blood armor

When the Gorgon discovered bloodtheft and began employing it to increase his own power, he destroyed many of the most noble and powerful heroes of the new age before they had a

chance to defend themselves. Those newly-invested scions had to discover a way to defend their bloodlines against bloodtheft—even if they could not protect their lives—so that the monstrous Prince Raesaene could not gain their power.

The wizards and priests of the new gods cooperated to develop *blood armor*. Usually made of metal (possibly some tighmaevril-related alloy) and constructed as plate, chain, or improved mail, these suits of armor protect a regent's life to some extent—and his bloodline from bloodtheft completely.

Most *blood armor* created in the early years had an Armor Class bonus of -2 to -5. If any lesser versions exist today, they probably have -1 to -3 adjustments. In either case, however, a scion wearing *blood armor* cannot lose his bloodline through bloodtheft. The metal and magic in the armor protects him from that eventuality, even though a strike through the heart could still slay the wearer. The *blood armor*, greater or lesser, disperses the bloodline without passing it on to the scion's killer.

**Rumors and legends:** Some *blood armor* may have the ability to store a killed regent's bloodline, in much the same way a *sword of blood* (see below) does. Only a person of the same bloodline, donning the armor, could call forth and absorb the former wearer's bloodline and blood abilities.

Other magics may have been incorporated into some of the more legendary suits of *blood armor*. Grettia Danig, Countess of Danigau, may have possessed a full suit of field plate *blood armor* that actually enhanced her own blood abilities, increasing their effectiveness by one step (her minor abilities became major and her major became great while she wore the armor).

## brecht fine leather

Most often made from seal or sea lion skin, enchanted *Brecht fine leather* armor sheds water and allows freedom of action to its wearer. Shiny and black, this armor protects its wearer from weapons and the elements equally well. Most *Brecht fine leather* armor comes designed for humans of Brecht stature (somewhat short and stocky), but it stretches admirably well (any human or elf should be able to wear a suit). It was originally manufactured for navy officers of the Brecht League in 164 MR.

*Brecht fine leather* armor covers its wearer from neck to toe, providing AC 4 protection but allowing complete freedom of movement. Slick and smooth, it fits snugly. It provides protection even

from the northern Brecht winters—while still comfortable in the hot summer months of the Basin States. In the water, it provides temperature protection (even the cold of the Black Ice Bay cannot penetrate it) and the ability to move easily (per a *ring of free action*). The armor provides no protection from *hold* spells, however.

**Rumors and legends:** While some Brecht armorers still hold the secret of making *Brecht fine leather*, only a practitioner of true magic can enchant the suits. Still, many suits survive, as a memorial to the Brecht Free League, and many noble houses of Brechtür keep several among their treasure hoards.

Some legends speak of *white Brecht fine leather* made from the pelts of white seals. This armor, in addition to its normal bonuses, is said to have provided 50% magic resistance to its wearer and the ability to *hide in shadows* among snow drifts or any other white background with a 75% chance of success.

## shadow armor

Brought to the Battle of Mount Deismaar by the few halflings of Cerilia willing to join the fight on either side, these suits of leather armor come in elf and human sizes as well—the halflings made them for their allies.

A warrior wearing a suit of *shadow armor* can use the *shadow form* blood ability once per day for a duration of one turn. The *shadow armor* also helps protect him from Shadow World creatures: While the armor normally carries a -1 to -3 Armor Class bonus, its protection doubles against creatures of the Shadow World.

**Rumors and legends:** While the halflings of Cerilia fought on the side of light during the War of Shadow—if they fought at all—many people believe still more halflings existed (and may still exist) in the Shadow World. If so, they probably have *shadow armor* that works much the same way—only protecting themselves and their Shadow World allies and servants from creatures coming from Cerilia.

## war-horns of boeraq

The orogs, goblins, and gnolls of Cerilia have their own magical items. The *war-horns of*

*Boerag* may have been given to the orogs of the Sword Rust Tribes by an even wizard, perhaps even the Raven himself.

The war-horns attach to the traditional conic helmet of the orog war chieftain, giving him a fearsome appearance. Non-orogs within 50 feet of the wearer must succeed at a saving throw vs. spell or suffer quaking fear that causes a -2 penalty to all saving throws and attacks while within range of the horns.

Conversely, the war-horns provide their orog wearer with a +2 bonus to all attacks and saving throws, and make him invulnerable to all fear attacks.

**Rumors and legends:** The actual *War-Horns of Boerag* were named for the orog war-chief gifted with the initial set. Though Boerag died in battle against the Vos in what is now Rovninodensk, the original war-horns were never recovered. It is said that anyone wearing the original *War-Horns of Boerag* could cause all orogs within a 100-foot radius to respond to the leader as if *charmed* with no saving throw.

## weapons

Behind every magical weapon lies a story. Sometimes, only legends or myths surround a weapon, while other times every battle the weapon's wielders participated in can be traced through history as accurately as the Lord High Castellan tracks the monetary expenditures of his subordinates.

Weapons have always been important in Cerilia. Not only used for fighting, they remain symbols of ideals and bloodlines that might be forgotten or lost for a time, but never destroyed. Even the most pacifistic rulers on Cerilia hearken to stories of mystical weapons and symbols of their ancestry.

### arrow, deathbolt

Supposedly created by elf wizards during the early days of the *gheallie Sidhe* the shafts known as *deathbolt arrows* contained powerful spells to ensure the deaths of those they struck. Typical *deathbolts* grant archers a +3 bonus to both their chance of hitting a target and the amount of damage inflicted, but they all bear a

stronger spell as well.

If a *deathbolt* strikes its target on a modified roll of 20+, the victim must succeed at a saving throw vs. death magic or suffer the consequences. The arrowhead of the *deathbolt* dissolves instantly inside of its victim, spreading like a cancer to the creature's bones and muscles. The victim loses one point of his Strength and Constitution scores every day thereafter until a *neutralize poison* spell is applied. At that point, a *cure disease* spell can restore lost ability scores completely—otherwise, they return at a rate of one point each of Strength and Constitution per week.

**Rumors and legends:** The elves participating in the *gheallie Sidhe* learned to their dismay that human priests could counteract the effects of the *deathbolt* arrow with their strange magics. If the elves came up with a version of the *deathbolt* immune to these spells, it has not been recorded.

### arrow, straight

Developed during the Witch Wars of the Vos, *straight arrows* were used by the northern people to detect magical tricks and traps on the battlefield. When a *straight arrow* is fired into an illusion (such as *hallucinatory terrain*), the illusion shimmers and, for a moment, the true nature of the situation can be perceived. The *straight arrow* need not be used on the battlefield, however—firing it into any spell of the *illusion* school causes it to activate.

**Rumors and legends:** *Straight arrows* were considered relatively minor weapons by the Vos and few achieved any notoriety. Still, some believe the original *straight arrows* (of which there are few, if any, left in existence) could slay practitioners of magic with a mere scratch. If this is true, when one of the original *straight arrows* hits a wizard, magician, or bard (or anyone else with access to the *illusion* school of magic), that character must succeed at a saving throw vs. death magic or die instantly.

### lance of the gray legion

The *lance of the Gray Legion* became the signature weapon of an ancient warrior company that once fought on the side of Azrai in the War of Shadow. Brought from Aduria by a company of evil men and monsters under Azrai's command, the lances struck terror into the hearts of the evil god's enemies—until the Gray Legion betrayed its evil master and came over to the side of good. Azrai and his Vos warriors destroyed the last of the Gray Legion at the Battle of Mount Deismaar, but the lances disappeared.

No copies of the *lance of the Gray Legion* ever saw the light of day. Some have tried to emulate its powers, but they all failed in some way or other and their lances perished with their wielders. Some say a curse surrounds those who would reawaken the magic of the lance Azrai gave to his champions.

The original lances were +3 weapons that could be used either by a knight on horseback or a warrior on foot (as a two-handed weapon, in the latter case). Azrai granted it the power to slay any living creature (on a natural die roll of 20 the creature must succeed at a saving throw vs. death magic or be destroyed) and never took that power back. The god Anduiras, before he sacrificed himself to destroy Azrai, imbued the lance with the ability to slay undead as well (the same saving throw rules apply).

The lance inflicts 1d8+4 damage points against small and medium creatures, and 3d6+3 damage points against large creatures (including the magical bonus) when used by an unmounted wielder. When used by someone on horseback, it inflicts double damage. When wielded by a character accompanying a War Card unit (or units), all friendly units in the same square receive a +1 bonus to their attack and defense ratings, as the sight of the lance intimidates foes. Enemy units attacked by these units treat all **H** results as **R** results.

**Rumors and legends:** The *lance of the Gray Legion* may have come from another world and cannot be destroyed by any power of Aebrynis, nor perhaps even of the Shadow World. It may also have the ability to find a true warrior—Anduiras could have granted it a form of sentience that allows it to aid and advise a warrior dedicated to the destruction of the forces of the Shadow World.

Some say a banner exists to go with the lance. The last banner of the Gray Legion paralyzed with terror the mortal armies of Azrai. If such a banner exists, and could be attached to the *Lance of the Gray Legion* who knows what sort of powers the artifact could have?

## sword of blood

*Swords of blood* were created shortly after the discovery of tighmaevril. Commissioned by a number of regents in the first two centuries following the Battle of Mount Deismaar, these weapons protect a scion's bloodline from the predations of tighmaevril weapons. Though only a few true tighmaevril weapons exist, early scions had no idea how common they were and feared them greatly.

A *sword of blood*, when handled by a willing wielder, absorb one character's entire bloodline—all blood abilities and bloodline strength points—or any part of it. (If only a fraction of the bloodline is stored, a proportional number of blood abilities are transferred to the weapon along with it. The DM determines which ones.) As long as the wielder still possesses the weapon, he can access the benefits of his bloodline at any time and can transfer the bloodline back to himself automatically and instantly. However, if the weapon is separated from its owner while it contains part or all of his bloodline, the owner loses that part of his power.

Any character wielding a *sword of blood* imbued with a bloodline may gain the benefits of that bloodline and any powers imparted to the sword—as long as he does not use his own bloodline or blood abilities (if any) at the same time. For example, if a character holds a *sword of blood* with the shadow form ability and turns himself into a living shadow, he cannot use any of his own blood abilities while in shadow form. If the *sword of blood* contains any other blood abilities, however, he can use them as well.

When a blooded character passes part or all of his bloodline into a *sword of blood* the sword holds it until he releases it—or, if he dies before he can release it, until a wielder of his same bloodline holds the weapon and states the name of the deceased character aloud. Then, the bloodline and all the blood abilities residing in the weapon pass on to the new heir.

**Note:** If a character of a different bloodline follows the same procedure, the bloodline passes out of the weapon and into the new wielder as if the holder had committed bloodtheft.

**Rumors and legends:** Rumor has it that, rather than sacrifice a bloodline to an opponent, many warriors of old transferred their bloodlines into these weapons, which then were lost to time. *Swords of blood* containing powerful bloodlines might lie hidden away in some deep places.

## sword of the silent watch

Given to the first Baron of the Stille Wächter ("Silent Watch") in Rheulgard by an elven lord of the Coulladaraight, the *Sword of the*

*Silent Watch* represents one of many treaties between the Brecht people and the elven realm of Coullabchie. The only humans not to come into direct conflict with the elves during the time of the *gheallie Sidhe* the Brechts established a precedent of peace between elves and men that has lasted for centuries.

The original *Sword of the Silent Watch* might have been a broadsword, long and thin, such as the elves of Coullabchie use today. Made of a light and supple steel alloy, the weapons of the Coullabchie elves proved nearly unbreakable in those days—and this gift to the humans bore that ability well. The sword also granted its wielder a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls, and warned him of approaching enemies—it felt warm to the touch and hummed at a frequency only the wielder could hear when anyone he might consider an enemy came within half a mile.

The elves have given copies of the original sword to other barons and members of the Silent Watch, to other Brechts and even to some Khinasi of Sendoure. They have found their way out into the rest of Cerilia slowly. These lesser *swords of the silent watch* often come in the form of rapiers. They remain virtually unbreakable (receiving a +10 bonus to all item saving throws), and they give their wielder a +1 bonus to attack and damage. They also prove so light in the hand that a wielder proficient in rapier use and wearing light armor (studded leather or lighter) gains a -1 bonus to his Armor Class—the wielder can perform a limited parry using the magic and lightness of the weapon. The lesser swords also warn of any undead or creatures of the Shadow World approaching within 200 yards.

**Rumors and legends:** Some say all the *swords of the silent watch* contain an enchantment created secretly by their elven wielders: They do not allow themselves to be turned upon their makers. If wielded against an elf or half-elf from any region of Cerilia, a *sword of the silent watch* must make a saving throw vs. crushing blow every time it is used in an attack, with a -10 modifier to the roll and no magical bonuses. If the weapon breaks, it discharges a bright light and flame into the wielder's face, blinding him for 2d3 rounds and causing him 2d4 points of damage.

## sword of vassalage

The original *Sword of Vassalage* came into the possession of Ryullen Roele, Anuirean Overlord to the southern Rjurik kingdoms during the latter half of the ninth century HC. His court wizards created the first *Sword of Vassalage* as a peace-time weapon. True, it gave its wielder powerful magical attack adjustments in combat (and may have had other, secret powers as well), but it had another property that made it even more famous.

No oath of allegiance sworn on the original *Sword of Vassalage* could be broken. Even if the oath-taker wished, he could not act against his oath of allegiance. But the sword truly possessed a double-edge: The wielder of the *Sword of Vassalage* could not betray his vassals either. Oaths of protection and overlordship could not be forsaken or broken.

The original *Sword of Vassalage* disappeared in the Giantdowns centuries ago. The war that accompanied the retreat of Anuirean armies from Rjurik lands made it impossible to search for the weapon, and even rumors of its possible location have been forgotten.

Still, the *Sword of Vassalage* inspired others. Lesser wizards created lesser *swords of vassalage* for lesser kings, but they all bear some of the same power. Giving their possessor a +2 attack/damage bonus in combat, they can be found as broadswords and two-handed weapons on occasion. Rare and precious, their gifts do not end at the battlefield.

If a person knowingly and willingly swears an oath of vassalage on such a sword, he finds himself under the effects of a spell similar to a geas. He must obey his oath of allegiance, in spirit as well as word, for one year, after which he is released. He cannot, during that time, be commanded to take another oath upon the sword, or to do anything against the best interests of the realm or lord he has sworn allegiance to, unless that lord betrays him or his oaths of overlordship. If an overlord betrays in word or deed a vassal who has sworn on a *sword of vassalage* before the year of service ends, the vassal finds himself immediately freed from his oath—though he does not know why. Should either the vassal or the overlord die during the year of service, the oath automatically loses its power.

Lesser *swords of vassalage* may contain oaths from up to five vassals at a time. If the wielder of a *sword of vassalage* wishes, he may release an oath-taker from his oath at any time during the year. If the wielder of a *sword of vassalage* loses the sword (but the weapon remains intact), the oaths remain until they would normally run out.

The sword can take oaths for a new wielder during that time, as long as it contains no more than five total oaths.

**Rumors and legends:** Some say five original Swords of Vassalage existed—one for the Rjurik, Brecht, and Khinasi lands (for each of the Anuirean overlords), one for the Anuirean Emperor himself, and one that was destined for a Vos overlord who never materialized. Each sword bore different symbols and may have been of a different size or make (broadsword, two-handed, short, rapier, and scimitar), but they all bore the crest of the Anuirean Empire on their hilts.

## trident of oelde

One of the last of the doomed Masetian warlords, Oelde made a valiant stand for her people in the waning days of the War of Shadow. The *Trident of Oelde* may have been the reason for her success.

Made of silver and blue steel mined, it is said, from beneath the waves of the Baïr El-Mehare, the *Trident of Oelde* gives its wielder a +4 attack and damage bonus. It can be wielded two-handed by most warriors, but a character with an 18 or higher Strength score and a 15 or higher Dexterity score can use it one-handed. In melee, it inflicts  $2d4+6$  damage points on small to medium creatures and  $1d10+7$  damage on large creatures (including its magical adjustment).

The wielder of the *Trident of Oelde* also gains the ability to breath underwater (per the *water breathing* wizard spell) and move freely (as if wearing a *ring of free action*) for as long as he holds the trident. The owner also can cast *monster summoning II* three times each day to call water creatures. No true copies of this artifact exist.

**Rumors and legends:** During the Last Siege of el-Pahaere, a coastal fortress of strategic importance during the War of Shadow, Oelde used the trident to summon forth three sunken ships of her fleet, along with undead crews, to fight on her side in the battle. This maneuver so terrified Azrai's minions that an easy victory seemed within Oelde's grasp. Unfortunately, Azrai sent in undead reinforcements, and the undead fear nothing. Though the Masetians eventually won the hard-fought naval battle that ensued, Oelde and her ship were destroyed—and the trident was lost.

## rings

Rings have always been popular magical items on Cerilia. They are easily hidden easily, can be

worn all the time, and seldom call attention to themselves (hence, they avoid the notice of thieves).

## bloodstone ring

When worn by a regent or a scion, a *bloodstone ring* draws power from the land itself to transform part of a regent's bloodline into regency. The wearer can sacrifice one of his bloodline strength points and gain a number of Regency Points equal to his former bloodline strength score. So, if a regent with a bloodline strength score of 19 used the *bloodstone ring* his score would drop to 18, but he would gain 19 RP. A *bloodstone ring* cannot be used more than once per month.

Scions find this ring invaluable. It allows them to accumulate regency in the hopes of performing actions they otherwise could never do. Scions do not collect Regency Points normally, but a scion with a *bloodstone ring* could gather enough popular support and power from the land to accomplish a domain action.

Unfortunately, since a scion has no permanent link to the land, if he does not control at least a holding (0) by the end of the current month (action round), he loses the Regency Points he produced through his sacrifice.

**Rumors and legends:** These rings first came into being during the fall of the Anuirean Empire. Scions and minor regents, desperate for some way of amassing support against powerful rivals, developed these magical items as a means of translating their bloodlines into actual power. Some say many of the *bloodstone ring*s have been cursed and, once activated, drain a regent's bloodline strength away slowly, month by month.

## ring of reversal

A legendary item, the first *Ring of Reversals* said to have been created by the Sorcerer, a mysterious regent who once ruled lands now controlled by the White Witch. Surrounded by the superstitious Rjurik people, the Sorcerer feared becoming the object of a blood quest. Though the threat of bloodtheft lingers in the minds of all scions, the Sorcerer believed himself a prime target—for a success—

ful adventurer would gain not only his bloodline, but also the prestige of having rid the land of a wizard. So he crafted the *Ring of Reversal* to thwart such attempts.

The *Ring of Reversal* activates when one scion attempts to commit bloodtheft on another. The ring reverses the process of bloodtheft, turning the energy back upon the attacker—draining him of his bloodline and perhaps even his life.

When a character wearing the *Ring of Reversal* is struck in the heart by a would-be bloodline thief, the victim must roll a saving throw vs. death magic. If he succeeds, the magic of the ring deflects the attack, preventing the wearer from suffering any damage and requiring the attacker to attempt the same saving throw. If the attacker succeeds, his bloodline is drained completely and passes on to his intended victim, as if the scion wearing the *Ring of Reversal* had committed bloodtheft against him.

If either character fails his saving throw, that character dies instantly. Bloodtheft, one way or the other, occurs normally.

Since the ring's creation, other paranoid scions have made similar *rings of reversal*. These lesser rings function differently from the original: the would-be bloodline thief can lose only his bloodline, not his life. A failed saving throw means the attacker loses his bloodline; a successful saving throw prevents the bloodline drain.

**Rumors and legends:** Though the Sorcerer is no more and his domain has been taken over by the White Witch (see the *Hogunmark* domain sourcebook), no one knows what happened to his *Ring of Reversal*. Some say it was stolen over a century ago by a Rjurik adventurer, thus leaving the Sorcerer more vulnerable to the attack that ended his life.

## ring of the serpent

Produced for the Sons of the Serpent by an ancient Masetian wizard long departed from this world, the *rings of the Serpent* have passed from their original wielders and become part of treasure troves throughout Cerilia.

If a character wearing a *ring of the Serpent* strikes a target (making an unarmed attack, or simply putting the ring in contact with the victim's skin), the target must roll a saving throw vs. poison. If the

victim fails, he is exposed to magical poison, suffering 1d6 points of damage from wracking pains in his abdomen becoming unable to attack or defend himself well (his Armor Class suffers a +4 penalty). The pain (and penalty) continue for 2d4 rounds after the first, during which time the victim suffers another 1d4 points of damage each round.

**Rumors and legends:** The Serpent personally gave these rings to his worshipers, marking them as Sons of the Serpent forever. It is said that removing a *ring of the Serpent* (which looks like a serpent's mouth, with fangs hanging over the wearer's knuckle) causes a wearer to suffer the same fate as those successfully attacked by the ring's magical poison—no saving throw allowed.

The Serpent may also have a special link to these rings. If so, he would know the exact whereabouts of anyone wearing a *ring of the Serpent* within a 50-mile radius of the Isle of the Serpent (or the Serpent himself, were he to leave his island).

## miscellaneous magic

These magical items may prove useful for regents of any class. Some exist as known heirlooms in several realms, while others can be found in the treasuries of only the most legendary lands.

## bounder's guides

When the armies of the old gods marched into battle against Azrai and his shadow legions, they did not do so as one great force. Each god's army marched under separate banners, and not even all the followers of the same god united completely before the great battle.

To avoid direct conflict between their individual forces in the days leading up to the great battle, the gods created pickets imbued with the power to keep the different armies divided. When each army set up camp, sentries aligned these magical pickets, or *bounder's guides*, to mark their territory.

The guides contained enough magic to keep most normal humans, elves, and dwarves from crossing them. They would destroy most minor undead or creatures of shadow that tried to infiltrate the camp, and they sounded a warning if a creature of power broke their line.

Each guidepost carried or a symbol of the champion it represented, as well as a few markings to indicate the major foes of that champion. Friendly troops from another banner felt uncomfortable trying to cross the line, and had to suc-

ceed at a saving throw vs. spell or find themselves unable to cross the picket line. Enemy troops and creatures had to succeed at a saving throw vs. breath weapon or suffer 6d6 points of damage (success meant half damage).

Surprisingly, many of these *bounder's guides* survived the Battle of Mount Deismaar and troops fleeing the cataclysm brought them north, into Cerilia. Single guideposts often found their way into temple hoards, as symbols of the new gods. Unfortunately, a regent needs to assemble a complete set of *bounder's guides* (at least four, usually six) to use them effectively.

Luckily, priests of the new gods learned to duplicate the spells placed into the original *bounder's guides* to create new ones. If a regent places a string of these *guides* on his border (or around his castle, or even around an armed encampment), he can seal off that area to normal encroachment. Anyone who wishes to cross the picket line must succeed at a saving throw vs. spell or simply not be able to cross—in either direction. Only the regent can remove the pickets or cross them without rolling a saving throw.

Individual *bounder's guides* save vs. magical attacks at the 12th level of ability and can endure 50 points of damage before being destroyed. The magic of the pickets extends 50 feet straight up and straight down, as well as between the individual guides. If someone does manage to cross the picket line, the *bounder's guides* magically alert the regent who placed them. The regent knows the boundaries he set up have been breached, and where, but not by whom (or what).

**Rumors and legends:** According to legend, if a regent includes an original *bounder's guide* (one created by the old gods) in a string of lesser guides, the entire boundary gains the attack against those who try to cross it, as well as the ability to distinguish friend from foe (as perceived by the regent who places the boundary).

## brazier of banishment

Basarji wizards invented the *braziers of banishment*, and many saw use in those lands before the Anuirean Occupation. Unfortunately, most of the braziers were destroyed or hidden during the empire's rule, and when the Khinasi won control of their own lands back from the Anuireans, all record of their whereabouts had disappeared.

*Braziers of banishment* did not look like "typical" Khinasi magical items. Plain and rough, they appeared to be large braziers much like those used by the city and town executioners of the day. Used for branding criminals in the marketplace, the braziers

hardly needed much decoration.

But a *brazier of banishment* could be used only under the auspices of the lord of the land. He could, by invoking his personal power of rulership (1 RP), cause the magical properties of the brazier to activate.

Anyone branded with an iron heated in a *brazier of banishment* after it has been activated must leave as quickly as possible the lands ruled by the regent who caused him to be branded. The regent can set a time limit—not less than a week—for the now-branded outlaw to flee the realm, or he can leave the decision up to the brazier's magic.

Should the branded outlaw dally in the regent's lands, the brand mark becomes hot again, wounding the outlaw. On the first day of dalliance, the outlaw suffers one point of burning damage from the brand. No magical or natural healing can cure the outlaw while he remains in the provinces of the regent who branded him. The next day, the outlaw receives two points of damage that cannot be healed, then three, four, and so on. Accompanying these damage points is an excruciating pain that will drive a man mad within a few days to a week—so the outlaw has every reason to flee the regent's lands.

Once the outlaw leaves, he can heal his damage normally and the pain immediately subsides. If he ever crosses into the regent's land again, however, he picks up where he left off—possibly suffering four or five (or more) hit points of damage immediately.

Should a regent expand his realm to include lands inhabited by branded outlaws, they realize the danger immediately and have a "grace period" to depart—usually equal to the original time they had after the initial branding. If they choose not to leave, they begin suffering the wounds and terrible pain.

**Rumors and legends:** Many *braziers of banishment* probably still exist—but their owners don't know their powers. Some say that particularly cruel regents (possibly Anuirean overlords) used to brand rebels and criminals, then lock them up so that they could not leave the provinces from which they were banished. The prisoners died in terrible pain, and the rumor of these acts may have caused the magical braziers to be hidden from the general populace.

## living tapestry

Manufactured first by elf wizards, *living tapestries* have since been commissioned by at least a dozen human regents. These *tapestries* allow a true regent to observe his realm as if from above, with all its borders and landmarks in place.

Most *living tapestries* measure about 8 feet by 12 feet and were made to hang from interior court walls. So precious are they, however, that many remained hidden behind secret doors or illusion spells.

Each tapestry is woven to depict particular areas of a regent's realm. When the ruler looks at his tapestry, the shapes on its surface become three-dimensional and display the current status of that area. He can actually see rivers flowing or trees swaying in the wind. The scene appears far away, yet near, as if the regent were a bird, floating a few hundred feet above the earth.

A *living tapestry* primarily enables a regent to observe cities, towns, and settlements within his provinces—as well as the movements of armies and even individuals. The regent can spot any armed unit within the realm automatically, unless they have been protected from magical detection in some way. *Mass invisibility* spells work, but *living tapestries* can display the interiors of buildings, opposing sides of walls, and even activities underground. While the ruler views this animated depiction, anyone else present sees only an ordinary tapestry.

To view an individual, the regent must either know the individual's appearance fairly well, or have an accurate description. The ruler must concentrate on the tapestry and think carefully of what he knows about the individual. He then makes a Wisdom check at a -4 penalty (-6 if he is just operating off an accurate description). If he succeeds, the individual becomes the central focus of the tapestry's representation.

Unfortunately, the regent's view still rests several hundred feet above the ground. The regent will certainly know what province the character is in, and even what town, forest, or plain. However, unless the individual is alone, it may be hard for the regent to pick him out of a crowd. The tapestry still penetrates all nonmagical attempts at hiding—but a good, mundane disguise could still fool the viewer.

The regent cannot hear anything viewed on the tapestry

and cannot view specific targets for more rounds at a time than his Wisdom score. **Rumors and legends:** Some of the earliest tapestries, made by powerful wizard-kings, could be used to cast spells on individuals or even armies from the safety of the regent's castle. The wizard could look through the tapestry, move his perspective to within a few yards of his target, and unleash any spell in his arsenal on the unsuspecting victim.

## creating new magical items

Not much magic exists in the *BIRTHRIGHT* world compared to some other game settings. However, what magic does exist can be powerful. A *sword +1* or *ring of protection +1* is a big deal in Cerilia, because they are so rare. However, every magic item needs a history and a story.

The best way to create a magical item for use in Cerilia is to first think about the history of the continent. What events created the situations that exist today? What events *could have occurred* to shape the current political, social, and magical hierarchy of the land?

Danger and adventure motivate the humans, elves, dwarves, and other races of Cerilia. If confronted with a serious threat, they must think of ways to overcome it. The Battle of Mount Deismaar threatened Cerilia like nothing before or since. Naturally, the most powerful magics surround that event in history. But other significant events have occurred since—and probably before. The creation of the Anuirean Empire certainly caused ripples across the continent—its collapse formed tidal waves. Every human population has gone through upheavals in its histories—wars, political changes, and magical events.

Dungeon Masters should not limit themselves to recorded events. Over 1,500 years have elapsed since the Battle of Mount Deismaar—certainly not all of the world's events can be detailed in *BIRTHRIGHT* sourcebooks and accessories. DMs should create their own legendary battles, magical events, and incredible happenings.

And, surrounding every historical event, there might be a rumor or legend of magic. . . .